

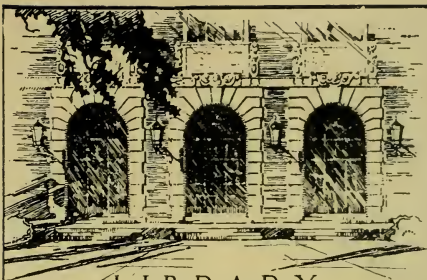


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# THE DISCARDED SON.



A TALE.



Lane, Darling, and Co. Leadenhall-Street.



THE  
DISCARDED SON;

OR,  
HAUNT OF THE BANDITTI.

A Tale.

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IN FIVE VOLUMES.

---

BY  
REGINA MARIA ROCHE,  
AUTHOR OF *THE CHILDREN OF THE ABBEY*, &c.

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Thou hast been  
As one in suffering all, that suffers nothing;  
A man who Fortune's buffets and rewards  
Has ta'en with equal thanks: and blest are they  
Whose blood and judgment mingled are so well,  
That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger,  
To sound what stop she please.

SHAKESPEARE.

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VOL. II.

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LONDON:  
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1807.



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## THE DISCARDED SON.

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### CHAP. I.

“ Under how hard a fate are women born !  
Priz'd to their ruin, or expos'd to scorn.  
If we want beauty, we of love despair,  
And are besieg'd, like frontier towns, if fair.” WALL.

ELIZABETH could not conceive what could be the cause of the malignant and disdainful glances she received from Mrs. Ruthven and Miss Rae. She had been introduced to them in a way to entitle her to their respect, and was fully sensible there was nothing in her own manner cal-

culated to offend. If the rest of Mrs. Dunbar's visitors deported themselves in a similar manner, she felt she should not be very desirous of prolonging her stay under her roof.

But of total neglect she had not long reason to complain. Mr. Ruthven was charmed with her appearance, and lavish in his eulogiums; nor rested until he had introduced himself to her particular notice.

This gentleman, beneath the semblance of the most thoughtless good humour, concealed a disposition not inferior in point of art to Lord O'Sinister's, and was, if possible, a still more dangerous character than his Lordship, as, unlike him, he was possessed of all the advantages of youth. In his admiration of beauty, he was enthusiastic, nor ever permitted any consideration whatever to prevent his pursuing the object he admired. He knew this was Elizabeth's first visit to this part of the Highlands, and led to a conversation, by asking her opinion of the scenery.

His

His manners were agreeable, and Elizabeth, besides, was too well pleased to be relieved from the awkward situation which being unnoticed by all made her feel herself in, to discourage the inclination he manifested to pay her attention.

The rage and jealousy of Miss Rae exceeded description; she trembled at the idea of her hopes respecting him being disappointed through her means, and, in the bitterness of her heart at their apprehended annihilation, curst, as fervently as he blessed, the chance which had thrown her in the way of Mrs. Dunbar. She left no art unessayed, to try to detach him from Miss Munro, but in vain. He heard not her sighs—he saw not her frowns or smiles—he had, in short, no ears, no eyes, but for the lovely creature with whom he was then conversing, and whose equal in beauty he thought he had never seen.

Mrs. Ruthven wished to see him engaged in some affair that might justify, or, in some degree at least, excuse the step she

herself meditated taking; for through the artful instigations of her unprincipled confidant, she had come to the resolution of no longer resisting the dictates of inclination: still, however, notwithstanding this resolution, and the above wish, she could not help being mortified at his conduct to Elizabeth, so malignant were the feelings with which her charms had inspired her.

Elizabeth, prevented by the conversation into which she had entered with Ruthven from further noticing the scowling glances of his lady and her friend, and alike unconscious of the envy and admiration she had excited, soon regained her wonted ease and animation.

On the announcement of dinner, Ruthven took her hand to lead her to the dining parlour. In their way thither, her attention was suddenly diverted from what he was saying to her, by hearing Lady Lochness enquiring of Mrs. Dunbar, whether she did not expect Captain Delacour to dinner?

Capt.



“Capt. Delacour!” (it may be recollected he had not mentioned to her the name of his relation,) repeated Elizabeth involuntarily, and with a glowing cheek, turning her eyes full upon Ruthven—“Does he visit here?”

“Why, do you know him?”

“Perhaps not the Captain Delacour that visits here,” returned Elizabeth, hesitating a little, and blushing still more deeply at the look with which this enquiry was accompanied.

“What kind of person is the one you know?”

“Oh, a very handsome man,” said Elizabeth, again speaking in the fulness of her heart.

“A very handsome man!” echoed Ruthven, in an arch accent, and with a corresponding look. “Upon my word, this will be flattering information for Delacour. I see, when ladies are taken by surprise, they will sometimes speak their real sentiments.”

“Nay,” cried Elizabeth, greatly confused, “I only meant to say, that—”

“He was reckoned handsome by every one you knew, and that you subscribed to the general opinion: but to reply to your question. From what you have said of the Captain Delacour you know, he is the same, I fancy, who is now on a visit here, the nephew of Mrs. Dunbar’s late husband.”

The pleasure which this intelligence afforded Elizabeth she endeavoured to conceal under an air of indifference, in order to avoid giving Mr. Ruthven fresh cause for raillery; but in vain she strove to divert his conversation from what she had just said. He continued to revert to it, till at length the pain he caused her became too obvious to permit of his continuing it.

During the whole of dinner, to the unutterable mortification of Miss Rae, his attention was almost entirely engrossed by her.

A short time after they were seated at table, Elizabeth was again attracted from him,

him, by hearing Lady Lochness asking Mrs. Dunbar, whether she knew the reason of Captain Delacour not dining at home?

“No, indeed,” replied Mrs. Dunbar; “I only know that he came into my dressing-room about an hour ago, to request I might not wait dinner for him, as he was going out immediately, and it was very uncertain when he should return.”

“An hour ago,” Elizabeth repeated to herself; then, in all probability, he already knew of her being an inmate under the roof of his aunt. Oh! if he did, and his feelings at this juncture at all correspond with her’s—she could not help flattering herself they might.

“What curiosity!” cried Grant, alluding to Lady Lochness’s enquiries concerning Delacour; “but I never knew a woman, at least a woman of fashion, who did not like to pry into the affairs of other people. Hence, to their inordinate curiosity about these, the little attention they bestow on their own.”

“Why you good-for-nothing creature,” returned Lady Lochness, “if we had not curiosity, where would be our knowledge?”

“Better be without knowledge, than such as your curiosity leads you to acquire, the knowledge of your neighbour’s faults, for the sake of publishing them.”

“You are a downright slanderer, and as such I believe I shall be tempted to erase you from the list of my favourites.”

“The list will be but a small one I am afraid, if there are none upon it but such as merit not the appellation you have bestowed upon me.”

“’Tis too bad, indeed,” said Hume, in an affected tone, “to rail at the loveliest part of the creation, without whom, as the poet elegantly says—“We had been brutes.”

“Yes, and whom you admire so much,” rejoined Grant, “that you endeavour to imitate them as much as possible. But, in reply to your observation, I always rail against those who are most deserving of  
censure.

censure. There was a time, indeed, when the women of this country were better than they are at present, but now they are quite as bad as any of their neighbours on the Continent—as well skilled in making for themselves other faces than those which Nature has made for them, in jigging, ambling, lipping, and nicknaming heaven's creatures."

" 'Tis a sure sign the days of chivalry are past, else you would not," said Lady Lochness, " be allowed to vent your spleen against us with impunity."

" The ladies need no champions now," remarked a gentleman; " they only required them in those dark and barbarous ages, when they were too much confined to allow of their merits being fully known."

" Your railing against the sex, let me tell you, Grant," said Ruthven, " is a sure sign of your having met with a grievous disappointment from some fair lady."

" A most indubitable one, indeed," uttered Hume." " Yes, 'tis clearly evident,

Grant, from your invectives against "Heaven's last, best work," that you have worn the willow in your day; but I suppose you were not aware of the construction your sarcasms were liable to, or you would not have uttered them. You see what it is not to have reflection."

"Yes, and hear what it is whilst I listen to you."

The entrance of Captain Delacour with a hurried step interrupted this conversation; and, as soon as he had paid his compliments in a general way to the company, with all of whom he seemed perfectly well acquainted, he approached a chair, which had been kept vacant for him, between Mrs. Ruthven and Miss Rae.

"You told me, my dear George," said Mrs. Dunbar, and, by a glance of her expressive eyes, directing his to Elizabeth, whom he appeared before not to have seen, "that you had the honour of being acquainted with Miss Munro."

"I did, Madam," replied he, smiling  
and



and bowing to Elizabeth, "and trust I have the happiness of now seeing Miss Munro well."

Elizabeth replied by a bow, too much confused, and perhaps agitated at the moment, to speak, owing to the scrutinizing earnestness with which she saw herself regarded by Ruthven, from the moment Delacour entered the room.

The conversation now became more general. Delacour supported his part in it with the utmost animation, but did not again particularly address himself to Elizabeth, a circumstance she did not, in consequence of the manner in which she was then situated, regret, especially as from the glances she from time to time caught from him, she had reason to believe it was not for want of inclination.

The looks of Ruthven were not more closely watched on this occasion by Miss Rae, than were those of Delacour by Mrs. Ruthven, he being the object of her heart's present devotion: their acquaint-

ance had commenced in London; and it was the knowledge of his paying a visit to her aunt, that had induced her also to do so.

Delacour, though possessed, perhaps, of as little vanity as any of his sex, could not help, from the conduct of this lady, beginning at last to suspect what was passing in her mind, a suspicion which, from the manner in which she was situated, afforded him great uneasiness; nor would it have given him pleasure, even though she had been single, as she was by no means the kind of woman he could admire.

Of the person of Delacour, a description has already been given. He was at this period in his seven-and-twentieth year, and already high in his profession, the navy. From nature he inherited all that generous openness of soul, that contempt of every thing mean and sordid, that careless prodigality, which in general characterizes those belonging to his profession. Of him, with truth, his father might have predicted  
what



what the father of the gallant but unhappy De Moor did of his son—"From that spirit of fire, which sparkled forth even in his boyish years, which shewed itself in an exquisite sensibility to every thing that was great or beautiful, that generous openness of character, the soul which spoke forth in his eyes, that tenderness of feeling, that manly courage, that youthful thirst of honour, that inflexible resolution, and all those shining qualities that adorned him,—that he would one day be the delight of his friends, and active supporter of his country."

His mother was the sister of Mr. Dunbar, and died whilst he was quite an infant. His father, the descendant of a noble house, and brought up, like himself, to the navy, had the happiness of living long enough to see his name enrolled in the list of the valiant. He was a good and gallant officer, and would, in all probability, have been able to have left him a handsome fortune, but for an unfortunate intimacy he contracted

tracted with Lord O'Sinister, who took advantage of a naturally careless and unsuspecting temper, to draw him into errors, that ultimately occasioned a considerable derangement in his affairs. A small independence was, however, secured to his son, but which he, with true filial piety, in order to prevent any obloquy resting on his memory, surrendered to his creditors, until their demands were satisfied, contenting himself till then with merely the emoluments of his profession.

His late uncle, Mr. Dunbar, as well as his lady, had always paid him particular attention, insomuch that he had ever felt for them the sincerest affection, and gladly embraced the opportunity, which the refitting of the vessel he commanded at Portsmouth, and preparing it for a long voyage, afforded him, of paying a visit to Black Crag, the seat of the latter.

The ladies had scarcely returned to the drawing-room, ere a large party, invited for the evening, began to assemble; and

Elizabeth

Elizabeth soon understood that a dance was in agitation for the younger part of the company. A handsome suite of rooms was thrown open, through which they promenaded, in detached parties, during tea, and previous to the commencement of cards and dancing. Every one looked gay, every one looked happy, and the cheerfulness of the scene could not have failed of exhilarating the spirits of Elizabeth, but for the cruel damp thrown upon them, by the neglect she experienced, in consequence of the conduct of Mrs. Ruthven.

Busy in arranging the card-tables, Mrs. Dunbar left to that lady the receiving her guests, and introducing Elizabeth to them, of which she entertained not a doubt. But, instead of paying her the attention she knew her aunt both expected and wished, and also what politeness demanded, she permitted Elizabeth to remain totally unnoticed in a corner of the room; and, in reply to the natural enquiry of who she

was, maliciously insinuated, for the purpose of having her entirely neglected, that she was quite an intruder upon her aunt, who meant, as soon as possible, to get rid of her, lest the family at Glengary should be offended at her being harboured so near them. This information had the effect she desired, as the only circumstance which could have induced any of the party then assembled to have incurred the risk of offending Mrs. Munro, by noticing a person so obnoxious, as it was justly concluded Elizabeth must be to her, would have been the idea of pleasing Mrs. Dunbar, whose entertainments were equally delectable.

At length, the sound of music in a remote apartment caused every one but Elizabeth, and those who were at cards, to hasten thither; and she was shortly compelled to follow, in consequence of Mrs. Dunbar's perceiving her sitting pensively on a window by herself.

With the greatest reluctance, and no little confusion, she entered the dancing room,

room, fearful of being reckoned an intruder, it being evident to her, that the mortifying neglect she experienced was premeditated. She found the party quite in a gay tumult, and only waiting for the gentlemen from the dining parlour to commence dancing.

At length they began to make their appearance. Ruthven was amongst the first who entered, and instantly espying Elizabeth, who, finding a vacant sofa near the door, had seated herself, approached, and took a seat beside her.

Ere he had well opened his lips Delacour also entered, and bent his steps towards the seat occupied by Elizabeth. But, instead of stopping as he had done, glided past with a slight bow, and going up to Miss Rae in a moment after, led her out to dance.

The pang which seized the heart of Elizabeth at the instant was too great for description. The pleasing hopes and expectations, which had again sprung up in  
her

her mind, directly vanished, leaving it a prey to shame and regret, for ever having given way to such ideas. “And yet, had I not some cause?” she said to herself; “but no, my vanity misled me, and perhaps to a suspicion of its having done so, is owing his not having treated me even as a common acquaintance.”

In the confusion and disturbance of her mind she forgot who was sitting by her, till restored to recollection by a rallying speech on her silence, and the sudden change that had taken place in her countenance. This remark so terrified her, with the idea of what was really passing in her mind at the moment being suspected by Ruthven, as to cause her to immediately endeavour to collect her thoughts; and, though never less inclined to gaiety, she permitted him, for the purpose of better deceiving him with regard to her feelings, to lead her to the dancers.

Mrs. Ruthven, although much dissatisfied at her hand not having been solicited by  
Delacour,



Delacour, still derived some consolation from his having selected her confidant, little aware that Miss Rae was so much engrossed at the moment by her own concerns, as to be utterly incapable of attending either to her's, or any other persons. Apprehension was now beginning to be converted into certainty. In the looks, the attentions of Ruthven to Elizabeth, Miss Rae saw every indication of his feeling that passion for her, which but a short time before she hoped she had herself inspired. If she could not recal him, she determined at all events not to sit down quietly under the disappointment he had inflicted on her, but to endeavour to make him experience in his turn something like what he had made her suffer; and this she flattered herself she should easily be able to do by means of his wife, who, if once assured there was a likelihood of discovering something in his conduct to excuse her own, would, she made no doubt, be too vigilant a spy upon  
his

his actions to permit his having the opportunities he might wish for with Elizabeth.

The set being nearly completed by the time Elizabeth and Ruthven joined it, they were almost the last couple, a circumstance of which Mrs. Ruthven, intent upon wounding the feelings of Elizabeth in every instance, took advantage to cause them to be left almost entirely by themselves, when it was their turn to lead off.

This rudeness determined Elizabeth on letting nothing again induce her to join the set; she could not conceal the indignation it excited in her bosom, an indignation in which her partner pretended to participate; although in reality he rejoiced at the circumstance that awakened it, since the greater the neglect she experienced from others, the greater would be the value, he flattered himself, she would set upon his attentions.

He resisted her importunities to leave her, that he might not on her account lose the amusement of the evening; and  
his



his attaching himself entirely to her being imputed by Elizabeth, in the purity of her heart, to good nature, she forced herself to appear pleased with his conversation, in order to evince to him her gratitude for his attentions.

Ruthven, almost as vain as he was designing, quickly began to ascribe to the motives most flattering to himself, the smiles and seeming pleasure with which she listened to and conversed with him. The idea of having already made an interest for himself in her heart gave a flow to his spirits, that rendered him really entertaining—"the very soul of whim and spirit of variety."

But, notwithstanding his amusing versatility, the eyes, as well as the thoughts of Elizabeth, frequently wandered, but never for any length of time, delicacy making her shrink from the idea of being suspected of an attachment to a person who appeared so totally uninterested about her.

There was no regular supper, to the  
great

great joy of Elizabeth, as she felt she should have been painfully embarrassed by the observations being stationary for any time, might have subjected her to. To her, whose cheek, till the present moment, had never been dimpled by a smile that did not immediately emanate from her heart, the assumption of a gaiety she did not feel was too painful not to induce her to seize the first opportunity that occurred for withdrawing for the night.

In the solitude of her chamber, the feelings she had with such difficulty restrained could no longer be controuled; alternately her heart swelled with indignation, and sickened with regret.

She wondered whether Mrs. Dunbar had noticed the supercilious treatment she had experienced from Mrs. Ruthven and Miss Rae; but no—when she retrospected her conduct, and reflected on the character Mr. Beerscroft had given her, she felt convinced if she had she would have interfered; and to this conviction was alone  
owing

owing her not resolving to depart from her mansion the ensuing day.

A critical review of the conduct of Delacour confirmed her belief of his indifference, which, 'ere long, however, she trusted she should think of, without the chilling sensations it at present gave her. Yes, she trusted her exertions would enable her to overcome a passion so inimical to her peace, and which both her pride and reason stimulated her to conquer, since it was revolting to every feeling of delicacy, to think of cherishing a partiality that was not reciprocal.

She did not quit her chamber in the morning till summoned to the breakfast-room, where she found a large party assembled, amongst which was Delacour; and Ruthven, under the expectation of her approach, was loitering near the door. The instant she appeared, he took her hand, and leading her to a chair, took one beside her, and recommenced those attentions he  
had

had paid her the preceding day. During breakfast a lively and pretty general conversation was supported, and various arrangements made, for passing the morning.

“Which party do you intend to join, Miss Munro?” asked Mrs. Dunbar with a smile; and after she had informed her she would not invite her to be of her’s, as she was going to pay some stupid visits in the neighbourhood—

“I don’t wish to go out, Madam,” replied Elizabeth (but timidly), convinced that she should not be a welcome addition to any one of them, yet fearful her refusal, as she could not think of assigning the proper reason for it, might be imputed by Mrs. Dunbar to an unsocial or capricious disposition.

“And pray, my dear,” returned Mrs. Dunbar, in an accent expressive of surprise, “what do you mean to do with yourself?”

“I have

"I have found some entertaining books in my chamber, with which I can amuse myself, Madam," replied Elizabeth, with still greater timidity.

"So studious," said Mrs. Dunbar; "but do as you please my dear; I always wish my guests to follow their own inclinations, that they may feel themselves at home."

As the party were separating after breakfast, a servant whispered Mrs. Dunbar; upon which she beckoned to Elizabeth, and in a low tone of voice, told her she would find some one waiting to see her in her chamber.

Elizabeth instantly guessed who she meant; and hastening thither, found, as she expected, Mrs. M'Tullogh, the Irish housekeeper, from Glengary, of whom mention has been already made, impatiently awaiting her approach, Mrs. Dunbar having good-naturedly sent to inform her of her being at Black Crag.

Her joy at beholding the daughter of her dear young master, as she still conti-

nued to style Captain Munro, filled her eyes with tears, and affected the grateful heart of Elizabeth not a little.

As soon as their mutual emotion had a little subsided, Mrs. M'Tulloch gratified her with some particulars of the family of Glengary.

“Both by his looks and manner, the old gentleman,” she said, “now appeared to be, what he was in reality, well stricken in years; but notwithstanding which, still led a bustling life, Mrs. Munro never being happy but when in a crowd. But not satisfied with his letting her go where she pleased, and see whom she pleased, nothing would content her but his permitting her to render him ridiculous; as a proof of which,” the housekeeper added, “he was now getting by heart, or at least trying to do so, some speeches for a character she had persuaded him to appear in at a masquerade she was about giving the ensuing week, in consequence of hearing such entertainments were quite the fashion  
amongst



amongst the fine folks in London, and for which great preparations were making.

“ I don’t well understand the rights of the character,” continued Mrs. M’Tullogh, “ in which the poor foolish old gentleman has been thus persuaded to expose himself; but, as well as the servants who have heard them conversing about it at table can make it out, ’tis that of a king—the king of Morven, I think—a king that’s of great note in a book that was written in these parts by a man of the name of Ocean—a queer name, is it not, Miss Munro, for a man ?”

Elizabeth merely smiled, and she thus went on :—

“ Mrs. Munro, for herself, has fixed upon that of a great favourite of this old king’s, the white-armed daughter of Toscar, whoever Toscar was; but how she will make herself pass for the white-armed daughter of Toscar, or Foscar, or any other person, I cannot conceive for the soul of me, except she keeps her



white leather gloves on the whole evening, since her arms are as red as a milk-maid's of a frosty morning; and no wonder, after all they have gone through, to be sure. How any one could take a fancy to her, and others so infinitely preferable in the way, (taking a sly peep at a glass she was sitting opposite), will never cease to surprise me; but there is no accounting for taste."

Whether she had succeeded in getting the old gentleman to secure his property to her after his decease, Mrs. M'Tullogh was not able to inform Elizabeth; but from the ascendancy she had obtained over him, it was rather to be apprehended she had.

Amongst other intelligence, Mrs. M'Tullogh told her Sir Patrick Dunboyne, the brother of the late Mrs. Munro, and of course her great-uncle, was expected over every day from Ireland, to spend some time at Glengary, which he was often in the habit of doing.

"He has not behaved kindly to my father,"

father," said Elizabeth, with some little emotion.

His not appearing to have done so, Mrs. M'Tulloch immediately assured her with warmth, was owing not to want of regard, but power to render him any essential service, in consequence of the embarrassed state of his finances; besides which, (proceeded she) he knew if he took any notice of his nephew, he should be prevented visiting at Glengary, which, on his account, he was anxious to persevere in doing, hoping by such means to yet obtain an opportunity of serving him with his father; that he held Mrs. Munro in the most sovereign contempt was evident, both to herself and every other person, notwithstanding which she was too much gratified by the notice of so near a relation of her predecessor's, not to pass over the slights she met with from him.

Elizabeth was pleased to hear this, because she knew it would give her father pleasure to learn that the neglect he expe-

rienced from so near a relation was not owing to want of affection.

In reply to her wishing to see the ancient seat of her forefathers, Mrs. M'Tulloch assured her, if an opportunity for gratifying her curiosity occurred whilst she remained at Black Crag, she should be apprised of it. After a little further conversation she took her leave, but not without begging permission to repeat her visit.

Elizabeth's chamber opened into a closet, which by a flight of steps communicated with a green-house, opening into a retired garden. The day was a lovely one, and, as soon as she was left to herself, she repaired thither.

As she was slowly pacing a shady path, absorbed in the reflections her recent visitor had inspired, she was startled on a sudden, by beholding Ruthven at her side.

Perceiving her emotion, "I fear I have alarmed you," he cried, smiling.

"No," answered Elizabeth, recovering herself, "only surprised me a little, as I supposed

supposed you had joined some one of the parties that were formed at breakfast."

"What," in a tone of tender reproach, "after hearing you avow your determination not to do so."

Elizabeth, thinking these merely words, of course, only laughed.

After a little conversation—"There is a beautiful and romantic spot," said he, "a little distance from this, which, I think, you would be highly delighted with—will you permit me to be your guide to it?"

Elizabeth made no objection—being a married man, and so near a relation of Mrs. Dunbar, inducing her to believe there was no impropriety in acceding to his request.

They accordingly quitted the garden, by means of a wicket at its extremity, and sweeping round some noble plantations, entered upon a shelving path, bounded on each side by high shrubby banks, in many places overtopped by clustering elders and hollies. The balmy sweetness which the

wild plants and flowers that bespread these banks gave to the air, the melodious caroling of the birds that filled their brakes, and the incessant humming of the busy insects that swarmed the adjacent shades, rendered this walk delightful. After proceeding some distance, the banks suddenly cleared away on one side, and disclosed to view a beautiful river, just where a ridge of rocks impeded the current, and produced a most picturesque waterfall. Across these rocks was a passage to the opposite side, where on the top of a steep cliff stood a beautiful fancy cottage, shaded in the rear by a complete grove of lilac, inclosed within a light white paling, which added much to the rustic appearance of the place. The summit of the cliff was covered with the finest verdure, and tufted with shrubs, interspersed with knots of flowers, myrtles, geraniums, and all such exotics, as during the heat of summer can bear the open air. The descent was rendered easy by flights of steps cut in the rock in various directions,

directions, and here and there deviating into little wildernesses, in which seats were placed for repose and recreation. At the base, and close to the water's edge, stood a small octagon temple, commanding most extensive views on either side of the river.

In this little rustic villa, which owed its existence entirely to the taste of Mrs. Dunbar, Ruthven informed Elizabeth she frequently entertained her friends with picnic dinners and rural balls.

Elizabeth was too much charmed to resist his importunities to take a nearer view of it; they crossed over, and on gaining the summit, Ruthven threw open one of the windows, which were all of fine plate glass, extending from the cieling to the ground, and answering the double purpose of doors and windows, and admitted his fair companion into a spacious room, but fitted up with a simplicity that made it perfectly accord with the exterior of the building. The floor was covered with

India matting; the chairs, of cane, were exactly in the cottage style; a dresser, of snowy hue, was furnished with a variety of curious Tunbridge ware; the walls, of a greyish colour, were hung with a variety of prints, chiefly taken from the Seasons of Thomson; and the windows ornamented with a drapery of brown silk netting, in imitation of that made for the preservation of fruit. This apartment opened into a smaller one, called the tea-room, and furnished in rather a more showy manner; the window-curtains and chair-covers, of slate-coloured calico, were edged with a deep border of roses; the rustic mantle-piece was decorated with a variety of fine old china; and the walls, instead of being adorned with pictures, were painted in imitation of trellis-work, with natural shrubs and flowers breaking through.

Elizabeth was in raptures with all she saw; and Ruthven professed himself equally delighted, at having been the means of  
affording



affording her so much pleasure. While she was looking about her he slipped away, but shortly returned with a basket of strawberries and bowl of cream, which he had procured from an old woman, who with her husband occupied the back part of the cottage, in order to take care of it.

Elizabeth, still imputing his conduct to her to benevolent motives—to his perceiving the neglect she experienced from others, and wishing to do something which should prevent her feeling it sensibly—received his attentions with a sweetness and pleasure, which still further strengthened his hopes of having already made a favourable impression on her mind.

This idea, united to the tempting opportunity he had for revealing his sentiments, emboldened him by degrees to betray them. At first Elizabeth treated as a jest what he said to her; but by degrees the encreasing warmth of his language, his still more impassioned glances, and some

liberties he attempted to take, made her drop her rallying manner, and determine on leaving him immediately ; but, on her making an effort to quit the seat in the inner room, with a kind of gentle violence he detained her.

“ Mr. Ruthven,” cried Elizabeth, as she struggled to free herself from him, “ I—I insist (almost panting with anger and alarm) on your instantly releasing me. Do not, by persevering in this audacious conduct, make me repent having formed a better opinion of you than you deserve.”

“ If I have been so fortunate,” returned he, in a most insidious tone, but still preventing her quitting her seat, “ to inspire you with a good opinion, surely my only yielding to the feelings inspired by your resistless charms—to the impulse of adoration, of admiration, cannot—or rather ought not, to rob me of it:—come, my adorable girl, do not look upon me with  
such

such an indignant aspect—believe me, you could not find a more grateful admirer than I shall be.”

“ This language, Sir, is as unbecoming your situation, as it is insulting to me.”

“ And why unbecoming? nothing can be unbecoming that is not unnatural; and surely it cannot be reckoned unnatural for a young fellow like me to speak of love to a beautiful woman.”

“ And why! what a question,” repeated Elizabeth; “ is it for you, a married man, to speak in such a manner?”

“ A married man! my dear angel (with the most libertine air imaginable): who, for heaven’s sake, do you think would ever marry, if they did not suppose they would still continue at liberty to follow their own inclinations? true, I am married, but matrimony has neither destroyed my taste for beauty or pleasure; in short, to come to the point at once—for I am no hypocrite, and, besides, consider life too short and precarious for any of its precious moments

ments to be wasted in reserves and scruples—I adore you ; and if you will turn a propitious ear to my vows, swear to you, that all I command, which, thank my stars, is sufficient to satisfy any woman at all reasonable in her wishes, shall henceforth be at your disposal.”

“Away!” cried Elizabeth, with an indignation that agitated her whole frame. “That you have strangely misconceived my character, I must suppose, or that you would never have insulted me in the manner you have done ; but this is no extenuation of your conduct, since, out of respect to Mrs. Dunbar, I should, as her guest, have been treated very differently. Unhand me this moment, Sir, or you will oblige me to expose your conduct, which, on her account, I wish to bury in oblivion, by calling to the servants.”

“My angel, to prevent your fatiguing yourself with such an exertion, know that the good dame and her husband are gone out into the neighbouring fields, so that  
neither

neither obtrusive eye, nor listening ear, need we dread." As he spoke, he attempted again to strain her to his breast.

"Listen to me, Mr. Ruthven," cried Elizabeth, endeavouring to check the terror his conduct inspired, emphatically laying one hand on his arm, and with the other parrying off the efforts he made to kiss her.

What further she intended to say was prevented by the sudden opening of the door communicating with the two apartments, and the entrance of Mrs. Ruthven and her unfaithful friend.

By persuasions of Miss Rae, she had followed them to the cottage, judging of others by herself, as the depraved heart is ever apt to do. Miss Rae, on Elizabeth's declining to join any of the parties at breakfast, immediately conceived a suspicion that it was owing to some agreement between her and Ruthven—a suspicion in which she was confirmed, when, in conse-

quence of having staid at home to watch their motions, she beheld them quitting the garden together. She directly hastened to Mrs. Ruthven, who, owing to Delacour's having excused himself from riding with her, had also, in a fit of sullenness, refused going out, and informed her, if ever she hoped to make a discovery, that might excuse the step she meditated, now was her time, information which quickly induced Mrs. Ruthven to oblige her. There was another, though more circuitous, way to the cottage, than the one Ruthven and Elizabeth had taken, and this they pursued, to surprise them, as above related.

Ruthven started up on the entrance of the unwelcome intruders, and his example was followed by Elizabeth, but neither attempted to speak; anger tied the tongue of one, and confusion that of the other.

"Upon my word, a charming spot this for the perusal of a tender tale, so quiet, and so romantic," said Mrs. Ruthven,

ven, after enjoying for a few minutes, in malicious silence, the evident distress of Elizabeth.

“Or for the disclosure of one,” added Miss Rae, still more maliciously, and glancing her flashing eyes at Ruthven.

“What a delightful thing is a good invention!” rejoined Mrs. Ruthven: “who could have suspected that some people (and, with a supercilious smile, she directed the eyes of Miss Rae to Elizabeth) had other motives for staying at home this morning than the ones they avowed!”

“Smooth water runs deep,” replied the elegant and gentle Miss Rae.

“Yes, so I now find; but we intrude—come, my dear,” taking her arm, “let us be gone—studious people, like Miss Munro,” smiling ironically, “don’t like to be broken in upon.”

Miss Rae hesitated about retiring, but finding Mrs. Ruthven was determined, and fearful, from the turn of his countenance, if she shewed any inclination to remain behind,



behind, Ruthven would betray her to his wife, and thus occasion the complete frustration of every scheme she had formed, she forced herself to refrain making any objection to the proposal.

On their leaving the room, Elizabeth recovered the faculties which the shock she had received from their unexpected appearance, or rather conduct to her, had suspended, and attempted to fly after them, but was prevented by Ruthven's catching her robe.

"For heaven's sake, my angel," cried he, perfectly recovered from his recent surprise, being too hardened to care either what his wife, or any other person, might say concerning him, "what are you about?"

"Let me go—let me go," exclaimed Elizabeth wildly, and struggling with him; "or, if you wish me to forgive your conduct, wish me to believe you not lost to every feeling of honour and humanity, hasten after your wife yourself, and exculpate

pate me from the suspicions 'tis plain she entertains."

"My lovely girl, think no more of her—envy, pure envy alone, caused her to say what she did; she and her companion are two of the most malicious creatures in the universe, and you cannot gratify them more than by suffering them to believe you mind them; only reflect, if they were not, could the simple circumstance of seeing us seated here, which was all they saw, have induced them to act as they have done?"

"Wretch!" exclaimed Elizabeth, bursting from his grasp, and escaping from the room, almost maddened at the thoughts of the irreparable injury her character might sustain, if it was known that she continued another minute with him after what had past.

Ruthven pursued her till she gained the passage across the water, when he paused, lest otherwise her safety might be endangered.

On

On reaching her chamber, which, owing to her swiftness, she did without further molestation from him, her first impulse was to seek out Mrs. Ruthven immediately, for the purpose of clearing herself in her opinion ; but when she came to reflect on the consequences that might ensue from such a measure, that she could not justify herself without villifying Ruthven, and thus, perhaps, occasioning an eternal breach between them, she relinquished it altogether, trusting her subsequent conduct would remove any unfavourable ideas that might at present be entertained of her.

It may here, perhaps, be remarked, that the most prudent step she could have taken, would have been to have quitted Black Crag immediately. Of this she was well aware, and accordingly would not have delayed her departure, but for a letter received from her father that morning, acquainting her that he and her mother were gone on a little excursion for a week or a fortnight from Heathwood—in-  
formation

formation which, owing to the terror she was under of Lord O'Sinister, rendered her unwilling to proceed thither, till apprised of their return. The instant she heard of that, she resolved on bidding adieu to Black Crag; and even sooner, if she found she could not awe Ruthven into decorum, or had any reason to imagine that her protracted stay gave uneasiness to his lady, or that she had injured her in the estimation of Mrs. Dunbar.

She shuddered, when she reflected on the lengths to which jealousy and misconception often lead people, and could only alleviate the anguish the idea gave her, by deciding on coming to a candid explanation with Mrs. Dunbar respecting the conduct of her nephew, should she have any grounds for believing she had been misrepresented to her by his wife.

With mingled horror and astonishment she revolved his conduct, the vile and ungenerous advantage he had taken of her confidence

confidence in his honour to inveigle her into solitude. That he was a hardened libertine she could not doubt; and who knows, thought she, but that to a consciousness of his being so—to a mind soured by disappointment and suspicion—may be owing the asperity, and seeming malevolence of his lady. “Oh, if I thought so,” she cried with energy, “how readily could I—how readily would I excuse whatever appears unamiable in her disposition, since I can easily picture to myself (and for an instant her thoughts rested on Delacour) what a heart of the least sensibility must feel, at finding itself deceived by the object of its love and confidence, compelled to lead a life of jealousy—to follow still the changes of the moon with fresh surmises.’ To such a state how preferable—how infinitely preferable, that of

“ the barren sister,

“ Chaunting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.”

Solely engrossed by the recent incidents, she thought not of dressing till a late hour;

in

in consequence of which she received a summons to dinner ere her toilet was completed.

Distressed and confused, at the idea of occasioning the company to wait for her, she hurried over the rest of her dress, and, with trembling steps, repaired to the drawing-room, scarcely able to make the apology she deemed necessary to Mrs. Dunbar. In reply to this—"Oh, pray say no more on the subject, my dear," said this lady; "when people are agreeably engaged, I know they are apt to forget how time passes."

Elizabeth looked earnestly at Mrs. Dunbar, and almost started, for she fancied these words were uttered with an ironical air. She quickly, however, endeavoured to subdue her feelings, and resolved not to be too precipitate in giving way to the apprehensions this idea excited.

To her unspeakable indignation Ruthven made an effort to take her hand to lead her to the eating-room. With a look expressive of the feelings he had inspired, she

shrunk

shrunk from him, and contrived, though not without some difficulty, to get a chair at a distance from his; but which, like the one she occupied the preceding day at table, was again exactly opposite Delacour's.

Thus situated, it was impossible to prevent their eyes continually meeting; and, with a sensation of surprise, Elizabeth still read, in the dark expressive ones of Delacour, a language very different from that of indifference. She would not suffer herself, however, to dwell upon this pleasing idea; his cold constrained air towards her plainly evinced his wishing her to believe he felt nothing more for her; and she accordingly determined to force herself to think so.

Malicious and disdainful as were the looks with which she was regarded the preceding day by Mrs. Ruthven and Miss Rae, they were tender and complacent, compared to those she now received from them.

But



But not sufficiently gratified by giving her silent indications of their hatred, they began to speak at her in a manner that crimsoned her cheeks with the blushes of shame and indignation, and would completely have overwhelmed her, but that, as from time to time she cast a timid glance round the table, she had the happiness of perceiving none of the party but Ruthven appeared to understand them.

Their conversation was a little diverted from her at length, by Lady Lochness enquiring whether they had yet begun to make preparations for the approaching entertainment at Glengary? To which, replying in the negative—"Come, Grant," added she, slapping him familiarly on the shoulder as he sat beside her, "I know you to have a good invention, so do help us to a few good characters."

"What, for the purpose of cutting up, as is your custom, when any fall in your way?"

“No, you wretch, but for the masquerade; I want to go in one that won’t easily be found out.”

“Then you must go in one not at all like your own.”

“And I too,” cried Hume, “I wish to do the same, for of all things (most affectedly) I like a character that’s not easily developed.”

“Yes—by a strange perverseness, we often like that which is most opposite to our own.”

“Indeed! you think then (still in an affected accent) that I am easily read.”

“Yes—with more ease than pleasure.”

“How vastly polite! but you improve—yes, you improve daily.”

“I am concerned truth will not allow me to return the compliment.”

“Don’t mind him, Hume,” said her Ladyship; “he only serves you as he does every one else; he really grows such a savage, I shan’t be surprised soon to hear of his digging a cave, and retiring to it like another Timon.”

“Since

“ Since so devilish fond of correcting, why don’t you,” cried Ruthven, “ turn your eyes inward, as Hamlet says ? ”

“ Because I should see there greater compassion for the vices and follies of mankind than they merit.”

“ Come, come, a truce with these vices and follies,” said Mrs. Ruthven, a little impatiently, “ and let us return to the masquerade, as a much more delightful theme ; what a charming taste does Mrs. Munro display in the entertainments she contrives for the amusement of her friends ! but really altogether, (and she looked spitefully at Elizabeth) she is a most delightful woman, and, if ever she quits this neighbourhood, we’ll all have to complain of a serious loss ; but I trust there is no chance whatever of her doing so ; I hope Mr. Munro has done justice to her merits, (and again she glanced at Elizabeth), by securing the whole of his property to her.”

This speech was too evidently aimed at

D 2

Elizabeth

Elizabeth not to occasion every eye to be turned on her. The emotions it excited, united to the embarrassment caused by this general observation, nearly overpowered her; her head drooped upon her bosom, and a scalding tear of indignation dropped upon her varying cheek.

Delacour, who till the present moment had been nearly silent, and apparently uninterested in what was going forward, now seemed hardly able to command his feelings.

“In such a hope,” exclaimed he, with the greatest warmth, and turning his eyes flashing with anger and scorn full upon Mrs. Ruthven, “I am persuaded, Madam, you’ll find but few persons, if any, to join you.”

“Indeed, Sir! and pray why so?” turning pale with rage at the look with which he regarded her.”

“Why so? Oh Madam, (with contemptuous indignation), what a question! excuse me for entreating you to recollect yourself.”

“No,

“No, Sir,” every feature swelling with passion, “’tis you that require to recollect yourself; I could not have supposed that you would have spoken in the manner you have just done.”

“Then, Madam,” bowing to her, with a sarcastic smile, “we have equally surprised each other.”

“Come, come,” interposed Mrs. Dunbar, “as lady president, I desire a new subject may be started; come, Mr. Grant, a song or a sentiment” (the cloth was by this time removed.)

“With all my heart, Madam, the latter—May innocence,” and his eye glanced at Elizabeth, “never want a friend, nor malice,” and he turned towards Mrs. Ruthven, but as if involuntarily “an enemy.”

The warmth with which Delacour had represented a speech so wounding to her feelings, would have given birth to the most delightful sensations in the bosom of Elizabeth, but that she could not help thinking, from the coldness and reserve with

which he now treated her, that humanity was his sole motive for having done so.

The whole party quitted the table pretty much about the same time, and repaired to a spacious gallery, the grand rendezvous of the family in general, and furnished at one end with billiard-tables, and at the other with musical instruments. Round the former all the party but Elizabeth, and such as preferred cards in an adjacent room with Mrs. Dunbar, immediately collected, the gentlemen to play, and the ladies to bet.

Elizabeth, alike neglected by all, for Ruthven had stationed himself at a billiard-table, seated herself in a remote window, commanding a full view of the sea, now tinged with the most vivid hues by the setting sun, as were also the stupendous cliffs that extended in a wild series along the coast—the haunts of gannats, shags, grey gulls, kittiwaks, razor-bills, and guillamots.

This scenery, so wild, yet magnificent, together with the monotonous sound of the waves breaking on the rocky shore,  
and



and the plaintive cries of the birds, now beginning to repair to their nests, gradually inspired a tender melancholy, soothing to the agitated feelings of the harassed Elizabeth. She became by degrees so completely absorbed in it, that she could not forbear starting, on feeling her arm touched by the tea-tray, which a servant had brought her.

Whilst helping herself, Ruthven also approached, and took a cup of coffee. "For I must," said he, giving her a look expressive of his libertine wishes, "have the happiness of being helped off of the same board with Miss Munro."

"Wretch!" inwardly exclaimed Elizabeth, averting her face with unaffected disdain from him.

"Now why so cruelly coy?" cried he, seating himself with an air of the greatest assurance on the window-seat beside her; "upon my soul, you'll quite annihilate my happiness, if you persist in being so."

"Coy!" repeated Elizabeth, with the  
D 4 greatest



greatest indignation, and involuntarily raising and turning her eyes, sparkling with anger and scorn on him. " Good heavens, Sir, how can you have the audacity to speak to me again in such a manner ? "

Without the least alteration of countenance, he was about replying to her, when a summons to the billiard-table, where the game he had begun was not yet finished, prevented him.

The train of reflections he had interrupted were too cruelly disturbed by his effrontery to be renewed. Shocked and disgusted, Elizabeth turned from the objects that had awakened them, in order to be on her guard, in case he again attempted to join her. Soon after, a number of additional visitors entered; and with these some musicians, whom Mrs. Dunbar kept in constant pay, made their appearance; and arrangements for dancing immediately commenced.

Elizabeth,

Elizabeth, however, moved not until she at length saw Ruthven again approaching her ; she instantly vacated her seat ; but her effort to avoid him was fruitless—he suddenly threw himself before her, and, catching her hand, would have led her to the set, but that she forcibly drew back. —“ What ! don’t you dance ? ” demanded he, with the most impenetrable assurance.

“ Not with you, Sir, assuredly,” replied Elizabeth, with all the haughtiness she could assume, and struggling to free her hand.

“ Then by heavens you dance with no other person to-night,” cried he spitefully, not a little piqued by her manner, relinquishing her hand as he spoke, and throwing himself full length upon a sofa, in order to watch at his ease her motions.

Elizabeth retired to as great a distance as she could from him, and also kept away from the rest of the party as much as possible, lest otherwise it might

be surmised she wished to obtrude herself upon their notice, which they appeared quite as little inclined to bestow upon her this evening, as they had done the preceding one.

Dancing, however, had scarcely commenced, when a young gentleman, who had but lately entered the room, approached her seat, and begged the honour of her hand. She was on the point of granting his request, when Ruthven, who, in consequence of seeing him approach her, had darted to her side, whispered in her ear, but in a voice too low to permit what he said to be distinguished by any one else, "Remember my declaration; by heavens, if you give your hand to that puppy, I'll tear it from him, and then kick him from the room."

Apprehensive of his doing what he threatened, and trembling at the bare suggestion of a disturbance on her account, Elizabeth immediately declined dancing, though

though not without the greatest reluctance, so much was she vexed at the thoughts of doing any thing that could gratify him.

“What! not dance, my dear,” said Mrs. Dunbar, in a tone of surprise, and who, having left cards for a few minutes, in order to take a survey of the dancers, was now at her elbow.

“No, Ma’am,” timidly, as well as hesitatingly, said Elizabeth, “I—I have got a head-ache, that—”

“Oh, my dear, ’tis not necessary for you to make any excuse to me on the subject; I always wish people to follow their own inclination.”

“Then, I believe, Ma’am,” returned Elizabeth, who clearly saw that she should not else be able to free herself from the persecutions of Ruthven, “since you are so good, I shall retire to my room.”

“As you please,” was the reply, but delivered, Elizabeth fancied, with a cold constrained air, “as I have already told

you, 'tis my wish that my guests should always feel themselves at home."

With a slight bow she then left her, accompanied by the gentleman she had been compelled to refuse.

"Why surely," cried Ruthven, who continued by her side, the moment they were left by themselves, "you can't be serious in thinking of going immediately to your room?"

Elizabeth turned from him without replying, and instantly retired.

She found her chamber illumined by the pale and silvery beams of the moon, already risen high in the firmament; its mild light was too pleasing to her to permit her to think of calling for candles directly; she seated herself in an open window fronting the sea, and as she contemplated, with that admiration it was so well calculated to inspire, the shadowy scene without, rendered still more impressive by the sound of ocean's heaving wave, and the wailing of the owl from the grass-fringed battlements

battlements of the castle, again felt the perturbation of her spirits subsiding, and involuntarily thought, as she felt its tranquillizing power, how much kinder Nature is to mankind than in general they are to themselves, since in the scenes she furnishes for their recreation, unlike those they too often contrive for themselves for that purpose, nothing is ever found that can give rise to unpleasant reflections, or debase their minds. "Oh, never," cried Elizabeth, as she pursued this reflection, "may I suffer myself to be led into any pursuits that can destroy my taste for her sublime works, or prevent my gazing on those spangled heavens, with the sweet, the extatic, the holy hope, of yet becoming a bright inhabitant of them."

But the quietness she so much needed she was not suffered long to enjoy. She had not been above half an hour in her chamber, when her meditations were suddenly interrupted by the creaking of the closet door, and instantly after perceiving  
a man



a man advancing from it : that the intruder was Ruthven she could not doubt, and with a shriek of terror she started up, and sprang towards the door leading into the dressing-room. Ruthven, however, for it was him, was too quick for her ; he gained it before her, and turning the key, took it out, and then hastening back to the opposite door, did the same.

Elizabeth, on finding her escape thus prevented, made towards the bell ; but was hindered reaching it by Ruthven's catching her in his arms.

“ Villain ! monster ! ” exclaimed she, as almost breathless with terror and indignation, she struggled to burst from his grasp, “ are you then lost to every feeling of shame and honour ? ”

“ To all but love,” cried he, straining her still more closely to his bosom.

Unable to disengage herself from him, and too well apprised of the remote situation of her chamber to hope the exertion of her voice would obtain her any assistance,



ance, terror now completely overpowered Elizabeth. The dropping of her head upon his shoulder, and the cold dampness of her lips, against which he audaciously pressed his, apprised Ruthven of the state to which he had reduced her; he bore her to the window, where by degrees the air revived her. But just as she was regaining her faculties, they were again nearly suspended, by suddenly hearing herself called upon by Mrs. Ruthven from the dressing-room, and Miss Rae from the closet, to admit them immediately into her chamber.

On missing her and Ruthven from the gallery, who, bold and presumptuous as he was deceptive and designing, had suddenly conceived the project of following her to her chamber, it occurred to them, that they had retired for the purpose of renewing the *tête-a-tête* which had been interrupted in the morning; and no sooner had this thought struck them, than they decided on besetting her, as above described, in order to prevent the escape of Ruthven,

Ruthven, whom his wife had now a double motive for wishing to surprise with her; the warmth with which Delacour had noticed the efforts she made at dinner-time to wound her feelings having stung her to the quick, and added jealousy to her other causes of dislike towards her.

“Oh! good heavens, I am lost—irretrievably ruined!” cried Elizabeth, in a low voice, and wringing her hands.

“Compose yourself, my angel,” said Ruthven, whisperingly, “and nothing that you apprehend will ensue; the projection beneath this window, permit me to make my escape by it, and thus disappoint the malice of those two fiends, whom the devil confound.”

Then returning her the keys of the respective doors, and snatching a hasty kiss, he stepped out, and in a few minutes reached the ground in safety.

In the meanwhile the two ladies kept thundering for admission.

“Open the door, I say, Miss Munro,”  
vociferated

vociferated Mrs. Ruthven, "immediately, or I'll call up the servants to break it open."

"If you keep me another minute here," almost screamed the enraged Miss Rae, "depend upon it, Miss Munro, you shall have cause for repentance."

At length they were admitted by the trembling Elizabeth.

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## CHAP. II.

" Her look was so artless, her accent so mild,  
Her candour so sweetly express'd,  
I gaz'd on her beauties, as blushing she smil'd,  
And clasp'd the lov'd maid to my breast.  
The primrose in clusters breath'd fragrance around,  
And witness'd the vows that were given ;  
The lark that sat listening soar'd swift from the ground,  
And warbled the contract in heaven."

MACNIELL'S POEMS.

" FINE doings there must have been carrying on in this chamber, to have it barricaded in such a manner," cried Mrs. Ruthven, the moment she gained admission, glancing eagerly round it as she spoke, in hopes of espying Ruthven.

" No doubt," rejoined Miss Rae, also looking

looking about, and then running to the bed, to try whether Ruthven was not concealed behind the curtains.

“Pray, Madam,” with a bullying air, demanded Mrs. Ruthven, enraged beyond expression at not finding her husband, as she expected, “what reason can you assign for locking yourself up in such a manner?”

“I deem it quite unnecessary to assign any, Madam,” returned Elizabeth haughtily, her spirit proudly rising at this contumelious treatment.

“Because you have no good one to give.”

“Whatever was the cause, this intrusion proves I was but right in doing so.”

“You insolent little hussey, is it by impertinence to her relation you manifest your gratitude to Mrs. Dunbar, for permitting you to come under her roof?”

“In reply, permit me to ask you, Madam, whether it is by insulting her guest you evince your respect for her?”

“Insulting !

“Insulting!—insulting!” in accents of fury; “why, if I did insult you, have you not given me cause?—have you not wounded me in the tenderest point?—have you not alienated the affections of my husband from me through your artifices?—are you not now carrying on a shameful —?”

“Hold, Madam!—hold!” cried Elizabeth, with still greater vivacity, “for your own sake, as well as mine, I caution you to silence, for be assured I am neither so destitute of spirit, or of friends, as to allow my character to be attacked with impunity.”

“Monstrous! I protest,” exclaimed Miss Rae, perceiving Mrs. Ruthven appeared somewhat awed by this speech, “I never heard such assurance; if I was you, my dear friend, I’d instantly go to Mrs. Dunbar, and make it a point that she should be turned from the house.”

“’Tis quite unnecessary, Madam,” replied Elizabeth, with a look of ineffable  
scorn,

scorn, "for her to take that trouble, for after what has just passed, nothing should tempt me to prolong my stay in it."

"Oh yes—you mean to leave it, to be sure," cried Mrs. Ruthven, sneeringly; "but come, my dear," taking the arm of her confidant, "let us leave her to her agreeable reflections, for her assurance really agitates me in a way that cannot but be injurious to me."

"The time will yet arrive, I make no doubt, Madam," said Elizabeth, "in which you'll be convinced I merited not such treatment from you."

The moment she found herself alone she rung for lights; and as soon as they were brought, and the servant dismissed, she carefully locked the closet door, and then repaired to the dressing-room, with a determination of passing the night there, her mind being too disturbed, and her apprehensions of Ruthven too great, to permit her to think of retiring to repose.

Never, indeed, had she been so shocked,

as



as by the cruel suspicions it was but too evident Mrs. Ruthven entertained of her. The hope, however, she indulged of her departure the following morning from Black Crag removing those entirely, was some little mitigation of the anguish which they now gave her.

She shuddered, and was truly grateful to heaven, when she revolved the narrow escape her character had ; for had Ruthven been detected in her chamber, she felt almost convinced, from the violence and malignancy of his lady and her friend, that she should vainly have attempted its justification.

That women brought up in the manner in which she took it for granted they were, should yield to such degrading violence of temper, was a matter of astonishment to her.

“ Of what avail is education,” cried she, “ if it does not teach us to subdue ourselves—of what avail its boasted advantages, if it does not enable us to resist the  
tyranny

tyranny of our feelings, since, in the moment of passion, there is no more difference between the elegant and vulgar mind, than there is between the cultivated plain, and sterile rock when inundated by the sea."

The consolation which the idea of being speedily restored to the tranquillity of her own beloved home was so well calculated to afford her, the apprehension she was under of Lord O'Sinister being now at Firgrove, rendered her incapable of feeling. She tried to hope, however, that, by unremitting vigilance on her side, she should be enabled to prevent his taking any advantage of her return to Heathwood during the absence of her father.

For some time she meditated seeking an immediate interview with Mrs. Dunbar; but at length the reflection, that Mrs. Ruthven might not after all touch upon the occurrences of the day to her, determined her also on silence respecting them, except she had reason to believe, from the conduct

duct of Mrs. Dunbar, that they had been mentioned to her prejudice.

After a watchful and most uncomfortable night, she threw herself upon the bed in a wrapper, just as day-light was beginning to dawn through the window-shutters ; but though fatigued in the extreme, the discomposure of her mind was too great to allow of her enjoying much rest. At an earlier hour than usual she arose, and was dressing herself, when Mrs. M'Tulloch entered her chamber to pay her respects, and enquire after the Captain, as she still continued to call Munro, of whose wound Elizabeth had informed her.

After Elizabeth had answered this enquiry, and mentioned the excursion on which her parents were gone, the house-keeper proceeded to say, that, in the course of the ensuing week, she hoped to have an opportunity of shewing her the interior of Glengary.

Elizabeth thanked her for the kind solicitude she manifested to gratify her wishes,  
but

but added with a sigh, she was about quitting Black Crag that day.

“What! and the dear Captain and your mamma from home!” said Mrs. M’Tullogh, in accents indicative of surprise.

“Yes,” answered Elizabeth, in a languid tone, her sleepless night, and the dreadful agitation she had experienced, having completely sunk her spirits.

“Why sure,” cried Mrs. M’Tullogh, after looking earnestly in her face for a minute — “sure it can’t be possible that Mrs. Dunbar has done any thing to affront you?”

“Oh, no,” eagerly replied Elizabeth, “Mrs. Dunbar,” and unconsciously she laid an emphasis on the word, “has done nothing to offend me.”

“But some one else has,” with quickness rejoined the housekeeper; “yes, yes, I see plain enough by your looks that you are vexed; and I think ’tis quite as great a shame for Mrs. Dunbar to let you be af-

fronted under her roof, as if she had done so herself."

"She's not to blame—she had nothing to say to the affair," cried Elizabeth; "if her niece bore any resemblance to her—"

"Her niece!" interrupted Mrs. M'Tulloch, "so it is she who has vexed you in this manner, and caused you to think of going away in such a hurry!"

Elizabeth, finding she had gone too far to recede, frankly related, but not without a flood of tears, occasioned by the depression of her spirits, to Mrs. M'Tulloch, on whose prudence and secresy she was well aware she might safely rely, all that had happened to her at Black Crag, as well as the circumstance to which her introduction to it was owing.

The housekeeper was all astonishment and indignation at her recital.

"Here's a young villain for you, as well as an old one!" she exclaimed; "a pretty scape-grace Mrs. Dunbar has got for a nephew, but heaven knows good enough for  
for

for the minx he's married to. Ah, I wish to the Lord some folks I know had caught him in your chamber, they'd have put a stop to his pranks for a while at least; but, my darling, you mustn't think of going home till you are certain the dear Captain is there, lest that big rogue of a Lord, the devil run away with him—God forgive me for saying such a wicked thing, but 'tis enough to make one mad to hear of such old fellows as he running after the girls—should take it into his head to contrive another scheme for getting you into his power. No—no, that would be like getting out of the frying-pan into the fire.”

“What am I to do then,” asked Elizabeth anxiously, “for to continue any longer here is utterly impossible?”

“Yes, yes, I know that well enough; but I'll tell you—you shall come to Glen-gary with me, where I have apartments of my own, into which no one can enter with-



out my permission, and where you'll be as snug and as easy as you can wish."

"Could I do so without the knowledge of Mrs. Dunbar, I would embrace your proposal with as much pleasure as gratitude."

"Nothing easier—do you only tell her you have received a letter from home, which makes you anxious to return there directly, and, instead of accepting her carriage for the whole journey, which of course she'll offer, merely take it to the first stage, where I'll meet you, and, as I am very intimate with the people of the inn there, be able to manage matters in such a way that no one shall discover more than you wish to have known."

To this arrangement Elizabeth made no objection; and being anxious to depart as soon as possible, she left to Mrs. M'Tullogh, who volunteered her services, the employment of packing up her things, whilst she repaired to the dressing-room  
of



of Mrs. Dunbar, to announce her intention of quitting Black Crag immediately.

The hour was earlier than she imagined, and instead of finding Mrs. Dunbar in the apartment, she only found her woman, who informed her her lady was not yet up, but she expected she would be in a few minutes.

This apartment opened to a noble terrace extending to the cliffs; and hither Elizabeth now bent her steps, to await a summons to Mrs. Dunbar.

“ The freshness of the morning air,  
Which nimbly and sweetly here  
Did recommend itself unto the gentle senses,”

was truly delightful to her after the fatiguing night she had passed. She strolled on till she came to the cliff that terminated it; here she paused, and leaning against a fragment of the rock, as her admiring eyes wandered over the restless surface of the deep, glittering in the expanding sun-beams, and traced the faint out-

line of some of the romantic islands of the Hebrides in the distant horizon,

“ Like clouds

Blue floating on the verge of ev'ning skies,”

her heart, notwithstanding the disquietude that pervaded it at the moment, experienced a sensation of rapture, such as the sublime and varied works of Nature never fail of awakening in a mind of taste and genius, a heart of piety and feeling.

On a sudden the sound of voices on the beach made her advance nearer to the edge of the cliff; and looking over, she beheld at anchor beneath it a beautifully-decorated vessel, into which several of the servants of Mrs. Dunbar were busied in assisting the sailors to convey baskets of provisions, a circumstance which gave Elizabeth to understand that a party of pleasure was at hand. As she drew back, and was retracing her way to the house, a quick footstep behind her caused her again to glance round, and she saw Delacour. She  
started,

started, but instantly recollecting herself, moved on, as if she had not perceived him. The agitation which she thus tried to conceal was quickly rendered more violent by his joining her. After the usual salutations of the morning—"By your being up so early, Miss Munro," said he, with something like the air with which he had formerly addressed her, "I am inclined to hope you intend being one of our party to-day on the water." Elizabeth slightly bowed—

"No, Sir," with forced coldness, she replied, "I have no such intention."

"Indeed!—well, I am sorry to hear you say so, though, if wise, I should rather rejoice, since the more I see of Miss Munro, the more I must regret the —." He paused, but only for an instant—the involuntary look of surprise he caught at the moment from Elizabeth caused him to proceed.

"Ah, why—why," in the most impassioned accents, he cried—"why so cruelly disappoint me?—why raise expecta-

tions you never meant to realize?—why not at once ingenuously confess the request I made you was disagreeable?”

“The request!” repeated Elizabeth, involuntarily, and with a bewildered look; “I know not what you mean—I know not what disappointment you allude to.”

“Why surely you cannot forget your having granted me permission to visit you.”

“Assuredly not.”

“Then surely you cannot be ignorant that the disappointment I allude to, was being denied admission after having obtained that permission.”

“I never heard that you called upon me,” returned Elizabeth, with forced calmness, and still an air of coldness.

“Never heard that I waited on you the morning after I had the unexpected pleasure of meeting you in this neighbourhood!”

“No, never.”

“Gracious heaven!” exclaimed Delacour,

cour, in a tone indicative of the greatest agitation, "are you really serious?—do you solemnly assure me you heard not of my visit?—desired me not to be informed that you could neither see me then, or at any other time, and therefore begged I might not repeat it?"

"Yes," answered Elizabeth, with a total change of voice and manner, the cruel deception which had been practised on her relative to him by the vile Mrs. Elford, lest, through his means, she should have discovered the dangerous situation she was then in, now flashing full upon her mind, "yes, I do assure you all this—assure you I left no message for you—never heard of your visit—if I had—."

"If you had," cried Delacour, in a transport, catching at these words—"if you had—oh, say—say, dear Miss Munro—would you have refused it?"

"Would I," almost unconsciously repeated

peated Elizabeth, half raising her fine eyes to his.

“ Oh, transport !” exclaimed the impassioned Delacour, snatching her hand and pressing his lips to it, “ what a weight has not this explanation removed from my heart !—what delicious moments have I not lost, from its not sooner taking place, by yielding to the pride which forbade me ever thinking of it ! In the pique and resentment of my heart, at your supposed ill usage, I vowed to maintain the most inflexible silence towards you—a vow which, but for the happy and unlooked-for meeting of this morning, I might, perhaps, have kept to my own eternal cost. Since you will not be of the boating party, would that I could disengage myself from it, that I might not lose another moment in pouring out at your feet the fulness of my soul—revealing the feelings with which you have inspired me ; but as I cannot disengage myself from it, I shall endeavour  
to



to console myself by reflecting, that perhaps in the course of a few hours I shall have an opportunity of fully disclosing my hopes—my wishes !”

At this instant, Grant and Hume, who, like him, had been down to the beach to witness the preparations making for the party, and, like him, ascended the terrace by means of steps cut in the cliff, made their appearance ; upon which Elizabeth snatched away her hand, though most reluctantly, and hastened to the dressing-room of Mrs. Dunbar ; she found it empty, and from the emotion she was in at the moment, was pleased at the circumstance, since, till Delacour had fully explained himself, she wished no suspicion to be entertained of their attachment. Was it then reciprocal—was the indifference which had lately marked his conduct towards her but affected—the warmth, the tenderness it now manifested, real ?—oh, yes—yes, the explanation that had just taken place permitted not a doubt of its being



so to obtrude or rather linger on her mind.

Delightful thought!—but ah, how seldom is happiness unalloyed! The transports of her heart were quickly damped by the idea of her approaching departure from Black Crag, and consequent separation from Delacour. Ah, what a moment was this to leave it, when he, for whom the secret sigh of her soul was breathed, had proved to her that that sigh had not been breathed in vain! But she endeavoured to console herself, by reflecting that he was not chained to it—that if his sentiments for her were really such as he avowed, her quitting Black Crag at this crisis would not prevent his seeking another opportunity of recurring to the conversation of that morning.

The entrance of Mrs. Dunbar interrupted her reflections on the subject. Elizabeth delayed not acquainting her with the cause of her wishing to see her so early.

Mrs.

Mrs. Dunbar expressed surprise and regret at her determination, but attempted not to oppose it: as Mrs. M'Tulloch had foreseen, she made her an offer of her travelling chaise, and also the attendance of her woman to Heathwood.—Elizabeth positively declined the latter, and only accepted the former as far as the first stage, making a plausible excuse for not taking it the whole way.

Every thing being settled for her departure, she repaired to her chamber to acquaint Mrs. M'Tulloch; and on her departing, which she did almost immediately, in order to precede her to the inn, hastened back to the dressing-room of Mrs. Dunbar, where breakfast was served, at which Lady Lochness, who, like the mistress of the mansion, was not fond of aquatic excursions, joined them. By the time this repast was over, the chaise was ready for Elizabeth. On parting, Mrs. Dunbar again said something indicative of regret at the shortness of her visit, and

charged her with her best wishes to her father.

On alighting at the appointed place she was ushered into a vacant apartment, where she continued by herself until the carriage of Mrs. Dunbar had driven off, when Mrs. M'Tulloch made her appearance; they did not, however, quit the house until it began to grow dark, when a chaise was prepared for them; they were set down at a lonely, and for some time past disused, lodge in the park, where the trunk of Elizabeth was deposited, and from whence they proceeded to the house.

A private door, of which Mrs. M'Tulloch had exclusively the key, gave them admission to the apartments she called her's, in one of the towers that flanked the building, consisting of a sitting-room and chamber, communicating with a spacious gallery, leading to the part of the mansion occupied by the principal personages belonging to it.

Here the housekeeper left Elizabeth,  
for

for a few minutes, for the purpose of procuring lights and tea. On her return, Elizabeth enquired whether the circumstance of her bringing these to this place would not be apt to create some unpleasant suspicion? To which enquiry she replied in the negative, adding, that as she was in the habit of often entertaining her acquaintances in the neighbourhood, nothing of the kind could excite surprise, or consequently suspicion.

In the course of the evening, Elizabeth, as she thought on her present situation, could not help reflecting on the strange vicissitudes of this life—how little her father, at one period of his, would have believed it possible that a child of his should be under the necessity of entering the mansion of his forefathers, without the knowledge of its possessors, and indebted to a domestic for an asylum in it!

The preparations now making at Glen-gary for the approaching entertainment frequently obliging Mrs. M'Tullogh to  
5 leave

leave Elizabeth for long intervals by herself, she endeavoured to prevent her feeling the dreariness of solitude, by supplying her with entertaining, or, as she styled them, handsome books. Fond, however, as Elizabeth was of reading, the occupation of her thoughts at this crisis, by recent scenes and future prospects, would have made her prefer seeking amusement in rambling about the delightful grounds surrounding her, but for fear of being discovered by some one of the inhabitants of Black Crag, still in its vicinity, than which, the idea of being, nothing could be more terrific to her imagination, from the suspicious light in which she was well aware such a circumstance would make her appear—there would then, she was convinced, be no bounds to the malice of Mrs. Ruthven and her friend, nor any possibility of refuting their slanders against her.

Nothing short of this fear could have withheld her from obeying the ardent wish she felt, for exploring the scenes rendered  
interesting

interesting to her by the knowledge of their having been the favourite haunts of her father—

“The scenes of his youth, when every charm could please.”

“Ah! how little, in the gay morning of that youth,” she more than once cried to herself, “did he imagine, that ere the evening of his days had well arrived, he should find himself an exile from the delightful shades amidst which it opened! Oh! if it be sharper than a serpent’s tooth to have a thankless child, surely it must be equally agonizing to have an unnatural parent.”

But, exclusive of the considerations which rendered them so interesting to her, she would, on account of their romantic beauty, have been pleased to have felt herself at liberty to explore the green solitudes of Glengary.

A greater variety of enchanting scenery than its spacious park exhibited, could scarcely anywhere be seen—hill and dale, wood and water, were here intermixed in  
the



the happiest and most picturesque manner; through shrouding woods, the growth of centuries, views of the distant country were caught, and of "the flat green sea," with the islands that diversified it, dawning through the mist of distance: the grandeur of the building perfectly accorded with the magnificence of the scenery; of antient date, it still retained the gothic appearance it had worn on its first erection, and was esteemed altogether one of the finest monuments then extant of the taste of former times, a building well calculated to revive the memory of other ages, to send the soul back to the days of old, when in its stately halls bards sung the exploits of the valiant, and on the clouds, on the wings of the wind, the dim ghosts were supposed to come from the place of their rest to hearken to the sound of their praise.

The exercise which apprehension prevented Elizabeth from taking without doors, she sometimes ventured to take in  
the



the gallery adjoining her apartments, as though it contained a suite of elegant chambers, these were never occupied, except when the house was crowded with visitors, which at present was not the case, nor expected to be, till within a day or two of the masquerade.

Here, at the closing hour of eve, when that soft and shadowy light alone prevailed within it, which,

“disarray’d

Of all its gorgeous robe, with blunted beams,  
Thro’ windows dim with holy acts pourtray’d,  
Along some cloister’d abbey faintly gleams,  
Abstracting the rapt thought from vain earth-musing dreams,”

she loved to wander, “indulging all to thought;” or sometimes pausing at the folding doors at its extremity, to listen to the sounds that prevailed beyond it, which she could here plainly distinguish; and not unseldom did she catch those of

“Riot and ill-managed merriment”—

a circum-

a circumstance, however, that did not surprise her, when she considered who was mistress of the revels.

On the very morning of the day fixed for the masquerade, Mrs. M'Tullogh brought her a letter from her father, left, like his preceding ones, at the post-office till called for, and which informed her of his and her mother's return to Heathwood—information that would have induced her to set out immediately, but that on enquiring she found it impossible to procure any kind of conveyance till the ensuing day, owing to the great demand for carriages, in consequence of the crowds that were coming to the masquerade.

Her curiosity excited by the preparations she had heard making for this entertainment, and anxious besides to see Sir Patrick, who by this time had arrived at Glengary, Elizabeth, since thus compelled to stay another day at it, suffered herself to be prevailed on by Mrs. M'Tullogh to  
take

take a peep at the gay assembly in the evening.

For the purpose of enabling her to do this, she procured her a mask, and about twelve o'clock, after her ears had been long assailed by the rattling of carriages, and the shouts of the rustic mob assembled without to view the characters, conducted her by private passages to a small door, communicating with the apartments laid out for the company, and to which she desired her to return, as soon as she saw them unmasking, that being the signal agreed on for the throwing open of the supper-room. This door opened into an anti-chamber, commanding a full view of the extensive suite of rooms fitted up for the occasion, and exhibiting a scene of the most splendid kind, such as brought to the recollection of Elizabeth the descriptions given in the romances of the Arabian writers of enchanted palaces. Music lent its powerful aid to heighten the fascination; which still further the fine perfume

fume of the aromatic shrubs and flowers that were intermingled with the other ornaments encreased.

Dazzled by the glare, and somewhat agitated by her novel situation, Elizabeth could not for some minutes summon sufficient courage to move; at length, her tremor a little subsiding, she ventured forward, and soon found herself in another apartment, exhibiting a very different appearance to the one she had first entered, that being quite solitary, and this much crowded; it represented a gothic hall, furnished as such apartments generally are, with shields, spears, and coats of armour; at one end was an elevated seat, resembling a throne, on which a mask, habited as an ancient chieftain, was seated; and a step or two below him sat a lady, dressed in a loose kind of robe, with a fillet round her head, and a harp before her. These masks, from the information she had received from Mrs. M'Tulloch, Elizabeth knew at once to be her grandfather and his lady, and

and she accordingly stopped to observe them.

They appeared to have excited much attention, and to afford no little amusement to the company assembled round them. At length, after some little tossings and bowings of the head, the white-armed, or as Mrs. M'Tulloch would have styled her, white-gloved, daughter of Toscar, began literally to strike the harp, for more she could not do. She continued to do so for several minutes, till at last she was completely interrupted by the convulsive laughter and mock applause which her performance excited. On the subsiding of this boisterous mirth, the king of Morven, bending towards her, gravely exclaimed—

“Pleasant is thy music, oh daughter of streamy Lutha!”

“Aye, aye,” nodding to him, and then looking round at the company, “that’s I—I am the daughter of streaming Lutha.”

“I thought you were the daughter of  
the

the mighty Toscar," cried a mask beside her.

"Oh, well it's no matter, 'tis all the same thing, and so —," in an expecting tone, again turning towards the king of Morven.

"I will reward it with a story," his majesty replied: "thou must know then I once was young —"

"Yes, but you are now old, and devilish foolish," interrupted a gaunt-looking figure close to him, dressed like a Spaniard; and from this circumstance known by Elizabeth, in consequence of the house-keeper's previous information, to be Sir Patrick Dunboyne.

The king of Morven, instead of replying to this, it must be allowed, not over polite observation, suddenly began to brandish his spear, the generality of the company hoped with an intention of representing it; instead, however, of realizing this good-natured hope, he started up, after  
a few



a few flourishes, and, in a threatening attitude, looked up at the ceiling, as if he had seen something there that displeased him.

“The king of Morven is getting mad!” exclaimed some of the masks laughing, and with well counterfeited terror, making a feigned effort to get farther from him.

“No,” cried his majesty, “but the spirit of Loda frowns upon me, but he frowns in vain; the sons of the wind shall not frighten the king of Morven:” and again he began brandishing his spear, with greater violence than before, at the ceiling; in doing which his foot slipped, and he fell prostrate on the ground: he was almost instantly raised, but so hurt by his fall, as to be incapable of resuming his seat, and was accordingly therefore carried off to his chamber by the servants, who had been called in to his assistance.

- As soon as the alarm and tumult occasioned by this accident had in a little degree subsided, the lovely Malvina began



to utter some not very gentle invectives against the unfortunate king of Morven.

“ Was ever any thing so stupid !” she exclaimed, “ after all the trouble I have had, in making him and myself perfect in our characters, to have him not know what he was about.”

“ ’Tis a long time since he has known that,” cried the Spaniard, or as, for the sake of brevity, we shall in future call him, Sir Patrick ; “ when men suffer women to make asses of them, they seldom have the right use of their senses ; by the Lord, if I had unfortunately been buckled to one, and she had endeavoured to persuade me to make such a fool of myself as that poor silly old man, I’d have blown her to Mount Atlas.”

“ Well, the further you blew her from yourself, the better pleased, I dare say, she would have been,” rejoined the fair Malvina, a little spitefully.

“ We are always valiant till we are  
tried,”

tried," cried a mask, somewhat sneeringly, in the character of Moody, in the Country Girl.

"Yes," returned Sir Patrick, "and wise in our own conceit, till, from the laughter of those around us, we find some fool has made an ass of us: you thought yourself equal to the management of a seraglio of such simpletons as Miss Peggy, and yet what a pretty trick she contrived to play you."

Elizabeth all this time was leaning against a pillar near the vacated throne, so shocked by the accident her grandfather had met with, and the ridicule and contempt he had exposed himself to—his grey hairs, notwithstanding his inhumanity to her father, having impressed her with something like veneration for him—that but for a fear of not being able to find her way back to her chamber by herself, she would have made an immediate effort for regaining it. She was now compelled by the moving of the crowd to quit this situation, and

the vicinity of her uncle ; and by degrees the music, the sprightly sallies of the company, and the gaiety and brilliancy of all around her, dissipated the unpleasant feelings, that had been thus excited in her mind, and reanimated her spirits.

She had nearly taken the circuit of the rooms, when her further progress was impeded by the crowd two very young girls, habited as Savoyards, had collected about them on their pausing to play.

Scarcely, however, had they begun to tune their guitars, and make preparations for singing, when one of them, owing to the heat of the room, diffidence, or perhaps both together, became so ill, that she was obliged to resign her guitar and unmask. Instead, however, of getting better for having done so, she grew so much worse in a few minutes, notwithstanding the instantaneous aid of smelling-bottles and fans, that she was obliged to be carried from the room, in a state that left but  
little

little reason to hope she would be able to return to it again.

Her companion, who had been all anxiety about her, but who had not made the smallest effort to follow her out, now began to cry most bitterly. The company, of course, attributing her tears to the most amiable feelings, those who were nearest to her exerted themselves to console her; she soon, however, with very great candour, gave them to understand that she should not have regretted what had happened, at least as much as she did, but for its threatening to prevent her keeping up the character she had thought proper to appear in, and which she protested she had been endeavouring to fit herself for upwards of a month.

“ If she had only sung one or two of the duets we have been so long practising for this occasion, I shouldn’t have minded so much her being obliged to retire so soon; but to have all this trouble for nothing,” proceeded the poor little girl, “ Oh, dear! Oh, dear! ’tis too

bad indeed. If any one can play," tendering the guitar of her companion to the circle, "let them take this, and they'll oblige me for ever."

Her prayers and supplications, for some time, answered no other purpose than that of encreasing the mirth which her distress, as soon as the real cause of it was known, had excited. For this Elizabeth conceived her extreme youth so sufficient an excuse, that she could not help taking compassion on her; and after a little irresolution, and reflecting that as they knew nothing of her musical abilities, her now obeying the impulse of good nature could not possibly betray her to any of the Black Crag party, decided on making an effort to prevent her being totally disappointed; and accordingly drawing nearer to her by degrees, touched her arm, in order to obtain her attention, and then whispered to her, that if she would detach herself from the present crowd, she would endeavour to assist her in a duet or two.

"Oh,

“ Oh, dear ! oh, dear ! ” cried the poor little Savoyard, in low but joyful accents, “ how delightful ! whoever you are, you are a charming creature for your good nature ; yes, yes, I’ll soon get away from this crowd ; I’ll go to a seat, as if I didn’t mean to play or sing, and then they’ll mind me no longer.”

Elizabeth nodded significantly, and the little girl requesting she would keep her in sight, soon made her way to a seat, where, as she had predicted, she was shortly left to herself. Elizabeth then took a seat beside her, received the instrument, and was instructed what duets to sing. Every necessary preliminary being adjusted between them, the little Savoyard having previously, however, examined her dress, to see that it was not tumbled, or injured in any manner by the pressure of the crowd she had just escaped from, set forward for the adjacent room, with a firm step and confident air, followed by her new associate : as soon as she had penetrated some way into this



apartment, which was also full, she began to touch her guitar, and motioning to Elizabeth to take her station beside her, commenced that beautiful duet in the Stranger of

‘ There is a grief that lodges here,

‘ It breathes no sigh, it sheds no tear’——

It has already been said, that Elizabeth touched the guitar with inimitable taste—that her voice also was soft, tender, and melodious: that the room, therefore, rung with applause on her ceasing to sing, cannot be wondered at, especially when ’tis added, that she sung and played with her usual excellence, the concealment of her face preventing her feeling that confusion she must otherwise have experienced at performing before so large an assembly, and which could not have failed of preventing her from doing so. But the admiration which was excited was not confined solely to her musical talents;—the harmonious symmetry of her graceful form, rendered strikingly conspicuous by the lightness and  
simplicity



simplicity of her dress, consisting of a fine white muslin jacket and petticoat, cut as low on the bosom and back as modesty would permit, and ornamented with a rich wreath of roses fastened on one shoulder, and hanging low at the opposite side ; the fine redundance of her glossy hair, twisted into loose tresses at the top of her head, the beauty of her arms and hands, which she had uncovered, in order to be better enabled to play—rendered her altogether so attractive, so captivating an object, that every eye was fastened on her, every tongue busied in enquiring who she was.

The little Savoyard was applied to for information on this subject ; she, however, could give none—and quickly tried to put a stop to these enquiries, by calling upon her again to sing, the applause with which the room had echoed, and half of which at least she took to herself, having rendered her impatient to give another specimen of her musical abilities. In vain, however,

she called upon her. The observation she had attracted was too evident to Elizabeth not to confuse and alarm her. She dreaded its occasioning her steps to be watched, and under this dread, could not forbear now doing what she had never before done—namely, repenting her having obeyed the impulse of good nature ; as, but for having done so in the present instance, she persuaded herself she should have been able to have glided about without attracting any particular notice. To subject herself any longer to what was so extremely embarrassing to her, was not to be thought of ; she, therefore, spite of the entreaties and almost resistance of the company, and the supplications, nay tears of the little Savoyard, laid the guitar on a bench contiguous to where she was standing, and immediately endeavoured to make her way into another room. Vain, however, would have been her efforts for this purpose, so closely was she surrounded by her admirers, but for the interposition of a mask in a black domino

domino—"See," cried he, in an animated tone, on succeeding in the efforts he made to extricate her, "what it is to be too attractive."

Elizabeth started; for in his voice she fancied she recognized that of the audacious, the detested Ruthven; nor was she mistaken; it was Ruthven indeed himself, the unprincipled Ruthven, whom beauty or elegance never failed of attracting: but though he had thus attached himself, as he imagined, to a stranger, the passion he had conceived for Elizabeth still existed in full force, and he only waited until the night of the masquerade was over, to set out in pursuit of her.

Elizabeth immediately endeavoured to separate herself from him, but to no purpose; his eyes were never turned from her for a moment; and the pain this circumstance occasioned her, was aggravated by the efforts he made to engage her in conversation.—Nothing, however, could induce her to reply to him, so fearful was she of her voice

betraying her ; and at length he asked her, whether, like the nightingale, she could only sing, not speak ?

But great as was the agitation which his noticing, or rather persecuting her in this manner, caused her, it was faint compared to that she felt on perceiving the company beginning to unmask, without seeing any possibility of her withdrawing unobserved by him. A faint sickness, owing to the apprehension she was in, stole over her, which for a few seconds rendered her scarcely able to resist the efforts he made to remove her mask after he had taken off his own.

“ No, no,” she at length exclaimed, in a low trembling voice, such as she trusted would prevent his recognizing her, and stopping his hand with hers, “ it must not come off.”

“ Must not—and why, my angel ? surely you will not be so cruel, so tantalizing, as to keep on this invidious shade all night.”

“ Let me go, let me go,” cried Elizabeth,  
al-

almost gasping through agitation, and trying to disengage herself from him.

Her supplications, however, to him to release her, had the very contrary effect to what she desired ; the motive to which they were owing being too obvious not to awaken a degree of curiosity, that made him resolve to persist in endeavouring to discover who she was. Accordingly, he held her firmly by the hand, and spite of her resistance and continued entreaties, drew her into the supper-room, where he took it for granted the sight of every other person without a mask would occasion her to throw aside hers.

The Goddess of Luxury herself might have enjoyed pleasure at this banquet, nothing that could possibly gratify her, or her votaries, having been omitted at it.—The apartment in which it was laid out was of immense length, and proportionable breadth ; the ceiling lofty, richly embellished, and supported by pillars of the most exquisite workmanship, entwined on this occasion with wreaths of flowers, and fes-

toons of variegated lamps, the spaces between each filled up with lemon and orange trees in full blow, and now scenting the room with their delicious sweetness.—At each end was an elevated gallery, brilliantly illuminated, and each containing an excellent band ; and, immediately beneath, magnificent transparencies—one representing the Gods and Goddesses, in the midst of golden clouds, at a banquet on Mount Olympus ; and the other, Venus, in her chariot, attended by sea nymphs and tritons, flying over the waves to meet Aurora rising in the horizon. The supper was laid out on detached tables, and every one, as they entered, seated themselves promiscuously at them.

The splendour of this scene was nearly lost upon poor Elizabeth ; still, however, a faint hope of being able to make her escape unobserved, on the thinning of the crowd about the entrance, kept her from sinking beneath her agitation ; but when in the course of a few minutes she

per-



perceived this rather increasing than lessening, and that of course there was no chance whatever of this hope being realized, her feelings became nearly uncontrollable, and compelled her to accept the seat the persecuting Ruthven had for some time been pressing her to take ; but not all his solicitations or arguments could prevail on her to unmask.

The seat he procured her happened to be at the very table where Mrs. Munro was seated—a circumstance that did not tend to diminish the agitation of Elizabeth ; especially when on timidly glancing round, she also beheld Mrs. Dunbar and Delacour at it, and, to her unutterable surprise, Lord O'Sinister.

“ Good heavens ! ” she could scarcely forbear exclaiming aloud at sight of his deceitful visage, “ there seems to be a combination of circumstances this night to distress me.”

Still, however, she endeavoured to support her spirits, and thus avoid betraying her—  
her—



herself, by reflecting on the chance the dispersion of the company after supper would again afford her of making her escape from the rooms in the manner she wished; but all her efforts for this purpose were rendered abortive, by her at length perceiving herself an object of general attention to every one at the table, and hearing the most invidious remarks, accompanied by sneers, shrugs, and titterings, on her acting so indecorously as to keep on her mask when every other person had laid aside theirs; and overpowered by shame and confusion, she fainted away.

Ruthven, perceiving her dropping from her chair, caught her in his arms. Her mask was immediately removed, and to the unutterable astonishment of all at the table who knew her, her features presented to their view.

Mrs. Dunbar's involuntary exclamation on the occasion betraying her name to Mrs. Munro, that lady, in great wrath and agitation of spirits, at finding a person whom  
she

she had so many powerful reasons for wishing to keep at a distance from it under her roof, followed her, after apologizing to such of her guests as were immediately in her vicinity, for leaving them thus abruptly, from the supper-room, whence she was carried by Delacour and Ruthven into one adjoining the hall, in order to enquire by what means she had gained admission to her assembly.

Mrs. Dunbar also did the same, anxious to hear what reason she could assign, for continuing in the neighbourhood of Black Crag, instead of returning home, as she concluded she meant immediately to have done on leaving it.

The room into which Elizabeth was conveyed happened to be the one to which Sir Patrick Dunboyne had retired a few minutes before—disgusted at beholding such parade and ostentation, while the rightful heir of the family, for aught he knew to the contrary, was languishing in obscurity. He had just taken a sandwich, which his man Mr. O'Grady brought in to him, and was wash-

washing it down with a tumbler of wine and water, when he was thus broke in upon—

“So, so,” cried he, on perceiving Elizabeth, “this comes of people cramming their rooms in such a manner that one can’t breathe.”

“No, it comes of no such thing,” replied Mrs. Munro maliciously, or rather furiously; “so I beg, Sir Patrick, you may cease your remarks on the subject.”

The coolness of this apartment, together with the aid of a smelling-bottle, speedily restored Elizabeth to her senses; but the shock she received nearly deprived her of them again, when on recovering and encountering the eyes of Delacour, she caught from him a glance of mingled tenderness, pity, scorn, and regret, and saw him, immediately after, vanish from the room with an upraised hand, as if bidding her an eternal farewell.

“They have prevailed then—the machinations of my enemies have prevailed,” she mentally exclaimed to herself, at the moment,

ment, in an agony to which no language could have done justice; "this unfortunate incident has confirmed the slanders, it is but too evident, from the conduct of Delacour, the contemptuous looks of his aunt, they have propagated against me, and my prospects of happiness are destroyed for ever."

Her head sunk on her bosom, and a shower of tears fell from her.

Unmoved by the sight of her distress, or rather more irritated by it, from the effect she thought it calculated to produce on others, Mrs. Munro caused her quickly to raise her downcast eyes, by now demanding, in the most authoritative tone, to what circumstance was owing her introduction to her assembly?

Elizabeth started; the consequences which might result to Mrs. M'Tulloch, from her candidly answering this question, became too obvious to her, not to cause her to hesitate for a moment, and then cast a timid, but beseeching look at Mrs. Dunbar, to extricate her from her present difficulty—a  
look

look to which that lady replied by another, that harrowed up the very soul of Elizabeth. Then turning to Mrs. Munro—"Though from the manner of Miss Munro, you might be led to imagine the contrary, believe me, Madam, I can give you no information on the subject; all I can tell you concerning the young lady is, that about three weeks ago, she came into this neighbourhood; and owing to a circumstance, not necessary to relate, became soon after my guest, but only for a few days, owing, she said, to her wish to return home; why she did not do so, to what motive her remaining concealed in the neighbourhood, and appearing here this night, is owing, she must herself explain; but as I have no wish to be present at the explanation, I must now beg leave to retire."

"Stop, Madam, stop," cried Elizabeth, wildly springing from her chair, and catching the arm of Mrs. Dunbar, as she saw her about withdrawing; "'tis requisite—'tis essential to my feelings that you should  
hear

hear it ;” yet suddenly reflecting on the mischief that might ensue from avowing before Sir Patrick, (whose “ antique sword had not yet,” she was convinced, “ grown rebellious to his arm”) the indignities she had met with from Ruthven ; “ that one which, I flatter myself, will restore me to the good opinion, I am now but too apprehensive of having lost, I could wish, on account of others, to give to you alone ; favour me, therefore, I entreat, with a few minutes conversation in private, and, I make no doubt, I shall be able to exculpate myself in your eyes.”

—Mrs. Dunbar shook her head, with an air of mingled incredulity and scorn—then “ the imprudent are ever apt to arrogate too much to themselves,” she said. “ I will however believe that you would not speak with the certainty you do, of being able to regain my good opinion, if I listened to your defence, but that you are unacquainted with the circumstances I have learned respecting you.”

“ Then



“Then my conjectures of having been slandered are not erroneous,” cried Elizabeth, with a look of horror.

“If you call accusation slander, they are not ; but whilst I acknowledge this, let me also say, that so high was the opinion I conceived of you, from your appearance and manners—so high also was that of Captain Delacour’s—( Yes,” perceiving Elizabeth start, and look at her with still greater earnestness, “his sentiments for you were not concealed from me ) that nothing but the positive demonstration we have had this night of your unworthiness, could have made us believe aught to your prejudice.—Farewell,” forcibly disengaging herself from the almost convulsive grasp of Elizabeth ; “for your own sake, I advise you to make no further efforts to impose on me, since such can answer no other end than to render me still more exasperated with you. My anger, however, does not deprive you of my good wishes : I shall not cease to hope that you  
may

may regret the past, and speedily endeavour to regain the path you have so lamentably strayed from."

With these words she retired, closing the door after her—"Oh, agony!" exclaimed Elizabeth, clasping her hands together, and dropping nearly senseless, at this confirmation of her fears respecting Delacour, upon the chair nearest to her.

"Why, what is the matter?" cried Sir Patrick, whom surprise had hitherto kept silent, rising as he spoke, and approaching Elizabeth; "did I hear aright? did Mrs. Dunbar really call you Munro?"

"Did she!" repeated Mrs. Munro contemptuously, (owing to its having suddenly occurred to her, that Sir Patrick himself had been the means of bringing Elizabeth to Glengary, for the purpose of endeavouring to introduce her to her grandfather.) "Oh! to be sure you are quite ignorant that she is the daughter of your hopeful nephew, the disgrace and plague of his poor father."

"The

“ The daughter—the daughter of my dear Robert !” exclaimed Sir Patrick, turning from Mrs. Munro, whose eloquence had for a minute suspended his movements, and in his eagerness to embrace Elizabeth, pushing aside the audacious Ruthven, who, the minute Mrs. Dunbar disappeared, had hastened to her assistance : “ my sweet girl,” folding her to his bosom, and kissing her tear-bedewed cheek, “ how much am I rejoiced to see you !” Then glancing at Mrs. Munro—“ Woman, woman,” with an uplifted hand, and in a voice of thunder, he cried, “ repeat not the words you have just made use of, lest you should occasion me to forget your sex and my own.—Come, my dear girl,” again directing his regards to Elizabeth, “ come,” gently raising her from her seat, and leading her to the one he had just occupied, “ compose yourself ; whilst I am by, no one shall insult you with impunity ; and when you are a little recovered, perhaps you’ll oblige me by letting me know to what circumstance your being under this

no longer happy, or respectable roof, is owing."

"Pretty language," Sir Patrick, "pretty language," in a voice almost choaked with passion, cried Mrs. Munro.

"'Tis such language," returned he calmly, "as you have not lately been accustomed to, else you would not be so ridiculously vain as you are—the language of truth."

"Oh, let me not, I implore," cried Elizabeth, coming a little to herself, and in the most supplicating accent, as she gratefully and affectionately kissed the hand of her uncle, "be the occasion of any disturbance here."

"Then this instant confess by what means you were brought hither, Miss," vociferated the enraged Mrs. Munro.

Elizabeth trembled:—she dreaded the disclosure required of her causing the dismissal of Mrs. M'Tulloch; but finding it impossible to evade it, endeavoured to collect herself to make it. But at the instant

lips were opening for the purpose, she caught a glimpse of Ruthven ; and reading, in his countenance, an expression of the greatest anxiety to hear what she would say, her unwillingness to gratify him, united to the detestation in which she held him—him, to whose conduct was owing all her present distress and confusion, she paused, until, at her express request, Sir Patrick had desired him to leave the room. She then, as briefly and collectedly as agitation would enable her to speak, informed Sir Patrick, that not having met with the politeness she had a right to expect from some of the guests of Mrs. Dunbar, she could no longer think of remaining in her house ; but being disinclined to return home during the absence of her parents, had availed herself of Mrs. M'Tulloch's offer of an apartment at Glengary till she heard of their arrival.

On her ceasing to speak—"Oh, my dear sister," exclaimed Sir Patrick, with hands and eyes uplifted, "how little did I once imagine I should ever have heard of a grand-child

child of your's being indebted to a servant for an asylum in this house !”

“ You should rather say,” cried Mrs. Munro, with the most malignant aspect, “ that you little imagined you should ever have heard of her son, acting in such a manner as to cause him to be an exile from it.”

“ 'Tis false—false as hell !” cried Sir Patrick ; “ 'tis not the manner in which he acted, but his father acted, that has caused him to be so—Woman,” again giving her a glance of fury, “ once more I caution you to have some command over yourself ; for I am not, by any means, in a humour now to bear your insolence, when this child brings so forcibly to my mind the wrongs you have done her father.”

“ Wrongs !” reiterated Mrs. Munro ; “ but I will not waste any words on you ; I will no longer delay letting Mrs. M'Tulloch know what she has to expect, for bringing a person she well knows her master would never have admitted into it,”—and she darted a dreadfully malignant glance at



Elizabeth, "to this house." She rang the bell as she spoke, with violence, and commanded the housekeeper (who, alarmed at not finding Elizabeth at the appointed place, had just entered the hall, to try whether she could gain any tidings of her from the servants) immediately into her presence.

Accordingly Mrs. M'Tulloch made her appearance in a few minutes, and to the great consolation of Elizabeth, stood the brunt of the storm that directly burst upon her, without shrinking. She ceased, however, to derive pleasure from this circumstance, on finding it only served to render Mrs. Munro more furious.

With a violence appalling to Elizabeth, she said, or rather swore, that Mrs. MacTulloch should the next morning quit Glengary.

Agonized at the idea of her losing a situation on her account, for which her parents, she but too well knew, had not the power of making her any recompence, Elizabeth, with tears, endeavoured to get this sentence  
revoked ;

revoked ; but in vain—Mrs. Munro continued inflexible—till at last, as a dernier effort, she promised, if she would comply with her entreaties on the subject, to quit Glengary by the first conveyance that offered, without making the slightest attempt to introduce herself to her grandfather, which, she plainly saw, Mrs. Munro was in dread of her doing.

This promise was eagerly caught at ; Mrs. Munro greatly fearing, notwithstanding her influence over the mind of her husband, that he could not behold such a descendant as Elizabeth, without feelings that might ultimately hurt her own interest.

Sir Patrick, who had meditated bringing Elizabeth into the presence of her grandfather, opposed it, as did also Mrs. M'Tulloch, but to no purpose. She could not be persuaded to make an effort to serve herself at the expence of another person ; and the latter was accordingly, in consequence of it, forgiven. This matter arranged, she quickly withdrew from the

malignant and haughty glances of the unworthy mistress of the mansion.

Sir Patrick accompanied her to her chamber, where a long and circumstantial conversation took place between them; in the course of which she gave him a particular account of all that had lately befallen her father, and slightly touched on the prospects of her brother, but with an involuntary sigh, owing to the apprehension she was under from her discovery of the real character of Lord O'Sinister, of these not being realized; and he, in return, detailed to her the embarrassments he was then under, and bitterly lamented the imprudence which had occasioned them, since the means of preventing his doing what his heart dictated for her father and his family.

"How severely am I now punished for the errors of my youth," proceeded he, "by the reflection, that but for them, I might now have been able to serve the descendants of a sister I adored; yes, yes, only like a cursed fool as I was, I never rested till I got  
poor

poor Poulsalougha completely in the mud, what a comfortable home should I have had for them."

He assigned the same reasons for the cessation of his correspondence with her father, and the continuance of his visits at Glengary, that Mrs. M'Tullogh had done ; and finally removed from the mind of Elizabeth every doubt of the sincerity of his regard for him.

On his rising to take leave of her, which, late as the hour was, he would not have done as soon as he did, but that he understood from Mrs. M'Tullogh the carriage she had engaged for her would be at the house as soon as it was light, he tried to force a purse on her. She was too well apprized, however, of the state of his finances to suffer herself to be prevailed on to take it ; but at length consented to oblige him by the acceptance of a ring, as a token of his regard for her and her family.

The rest which he had left her for the purpose of permitting her to enjoy, her

mind was too much disturbed to let her think of ; and even if she had had an inclination for it, she would still have resisted taking it, in order to avail herself of the present opportunity for writing an explanatory letter to Mrs. Dunbar. So hopeless, however, was she of this having the desired effect, that but for the consideration of performing an incumbent duty, in doing whatever had a chance of clearing her character from the aspersions cast upon it, she would have thrown aside her pen ere she had well commenced her self-enjoined task.—This letter, blistered in more than one place with tears of indignation and sorrow, she committed to the care of Mrs. M'Tullogh, with an injunction to deliver it, herself, into the hands of Mrs. Dunbar—an injunction she promised to observe, adding, she should take care to corroborate its contents, by detailing all the particulars she had previously learnt from Elizabeth—an assurance which afforded her some comfort, as she was well convinced she could not possibly

possibly have a warmer or more faithful advocate.

In reply to the information which Elizabeth gave her respecting Lord O'Sinister, she assured her she knew nothing of his being amongst the guests invited to Glen-gary. It was impossible, indeed, she should, as his appearance there this night was owing not to invitation, but to the importunities, or rather threats, of the lady who had been the means of bringing him down to Firgrove ; and who, from motives of pride, as well as interest, wishing to retain him in her chains, had insisted on his giving her a meeting at the masquerade, under pain of their intimacy being betrayed, and he thus exposed to the vengeance of her relatives, the idea of which, at this juncture, was too disagreeable to his imagination, not to induce him to do what she required.

Nothing but policy prevented him from following Elizabeth from the supper-room, as never, in his eyes, had she appeared



more beautiful than at the moment he so unexpectedly discovered her ; he therefore still resolved on persevering in his designs against her, trusting, if by fair means he could not get her into his toils, he should, by imprisoning her father, which he had the power of doing whenever he pleased, having had the bond for the five hundred pounds he lent him made payable on demand, instead of by instalments, and making her compliance with his wishes the price of his liberation.

At the expected hour the chaise arrived for Elizabeth : on descending to the private door at which it was drawn up, in order to avoid the crowd of carriages assembled round the public one, she found her uncle waiting to hand her into it, and Mr. O'Grady, his man, already on horseback to attend her to Heathwood—an attention which she was not only grateful for, but well pleased with, as the terror she was under of Lord O'Sinister and Ruthven would have made her feel uneasy at travelling without

out protection. Sir Patrick's farewell to her was truly affectionate, and such as drew tears into her eyes.

As the chaise drove on, she involuntarily turned her eyes towards Black Crag, and through the mists of morning endeavoured to descry its "castled cliff"—but the haziness of the morn completely veiled it from her sight, and, with a desponding sigh at the idea of never, perhaps, again beholding it, she at length sunk back in the carriage.

As she drew near home, she began to be agitated with fears of not getting collectedly through the story contrived to account, in a plausible manner, for her changes of residence since she had left it.

But these fears were unnecessary ; the strict examination which might have created a confusion, that would probably have prevented her retaining the composure necessary to carry her through her fabricated tale, did not take place ; for as the mind, devoid of suspicion, is seldom over minute in its enquiries, so her parents, not having the

smallest on the present occasion, did not perplex her with many questions.

Not being prepared for her return, they were most agreeably surprised at it, and were not a little gratified by her relation of the kind attentions shewn to her by Mrs. Dunbar, Sir Patrick, and the good-natured Mrs. M'Tullogh.

For those which she experienced from Mr. O'Grady on the road, he received their warm acknowledgements, and would have received more substantial proofs of their gratitude, but for his positive refusal of any present: with the chaise which brought her to Heathwood, he quitted it, charged with the thanks and compliments of the family to his master.

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### CHAP. III.

“ Was it his youth, his valour, or success ?  
These might perhaps be found in other men :  
’Twas that respect, that awful homage paid me ;  
That fearful love which trembled in his eyes,  
And with a silent earthquake shook his soul.  
But when he spoke, what tender words he said !  
So softly, that like flakes of feather’d snow,  
They melted as they fell.”

DRYDEN.

RESTORED to the tenderness of her beloved parents, and the soothing tranquillity of their peaceful home, Elizabeth trusted she should soon be able to recover the serenity recent occurrences had so cruelly interrupted, but which she was conscious she had

had done nothing to deserve losing. Vainly, however, did she endeavour to regain it, by trying to banish these occurrences from her thoughts ; she could think of nothing else, of nothing but the unworthy light in which she had been made to appear to Delacour—the destruction of her fond, her flattering hopes respecting him, and the consequence was, her mind continuing a stranger to quiet.

Ill at dissembling, the efforts she made to veil her unhappiness from her parents were unsuccessful. They soon discovered it, and as she had mentioned having met Delacour at Black Crag, and as they knew her previous opinion of him, did not hesitate placing it to the account of a hopeless passion—an idea that gave them no little anguish, as they well knew her's was not a heart capable of a slight or transient attachment.

Without distressing her, however, as they were conscious they should do, by appearing to notice what she so evidently wished to conceal, they did every thing  
they

they thought calculated to divert her mind, and give a turn to her thoughts ; and for that purpose courted the society of their neighbours, of which they had some that were highly respectable and agreeable, and promoted her going out, as much as possible, amongst her young acquaintance.

A suspicion of the motive that occasioned them to do this, and, of consequence, the pain they would feel if she did not comply with their wishes, made Elizabeth cheerfully acquiesce in them, though solitude at the moment was what she sighed for. The benefit, however, which they hoped and expected she would derive from change of scene and amusement, she evinced no symptoms of experiencing ; on the contrary, she daily appeared more languid and melancholy. Still, however, they determined to persist in the measures they had adopted for her cure ; believing, that if any thing could enable her to overcome the feelings that now preyed upon her, it would be innocent recreation.



But though reason and filial love influenced Elizabeth to embrace every opportunity that offered for trying the efficacy of these measures, she could not, sometimes, resist the temptation of doing what she was but too well aware was calculated to counteract any good effect they might have had, namely, sequestering herself in solitude, where, unseen of all, she could give vent to the anguish that oppressed her heart.

“Oh, my parents!” she more than once, on these occasions, exclaimed to herself, “you would not deem me perverse, if you knew the real cause of my unhappiness—if you knew that to injurious suspicions, even more than to hopeless love, it was owing; but never, never may you obtain a knowledge of this—oh, never may you be wounded where most vulnerable, by knowing that the blighting mildew of slander has fallen upon the reputation of your child, that reputation which you value more than her existence.”

The autumn was by this time far advanced, that season so delightful to the contemplative

templative and melancholy mind—when, in the fading scenery, man sees an emblem of the evening of his days, and, in the scattered leaves, a picture of his dissipated hopes—that season in which

—————“ In every breeze the power  
Of philosophic melancholy comes !

\* \* \* \* \*

Inflames imagination ; thro' the breast  
Infuses every tenderness ; and far  
Beyond dim earth exalts the swelling thought.  
Ten thousand thousand fleet ideas, such  
As never mingled with the vulgar dream,  
Crowd fast into the mind's creative eye,  
As fast the correspondent passions rise,  
As varied, and as high : devotion rais'd  
To rapture, and divine astonishment ;  
The love of nature unconfin'd, and chief  
Of human race, the large ambitious wish,  
To make them blest ; the sigh of suffering worth  
Lost in obscurity ; the noble scorn  
Of tyrant pride ; the fearless great resolve ;  
The wonder which the dying patriot draws,  
Inspiring glory thro' remotest time ;  
Th' awakened throb for virtue, and for fame ;  
The sympathies of love, and friendship dear,  
With all the social offspring of the heart.”

Eliza-

Elizabeth's passion for solitude was heightened by the season ; the incessant rustling of the trees, the silence of the saddened grove, where scarce was heard

“ One dying strain, to cheer the woodman's toil ;”

the calm, the quiet, that seemed to invest every surrounding object, shed a soothing charm over her feelings.

More than usually oppressed one morning, she stole away from the house soon after breakfast, and hastily traversing the garden, plunged into a wood that skirted it, where, throwing herself upon a little mossy hillock, she freely indulged her tears. The scene by which she was surrounded was but ill calculated to stay them ; and perhaps it was from knowing this that she sought it : the trees, in every direction, presented only leafless boughs to her view, through which the wind already began to make wintry music, the summits of the congregated mountains looked cold and dismal, the grass in the vales had assumed a mourn-  
ful

ful hue, and the fine verdure of the shrubs was lost, whilst

“ Haply some widowed songster pour’d his plaint  
Far in faint warblings, thro’ the tawny copse,  
While congregated thrushes, linnets, larks,  
And each wild throat, whose artless strains so late  
Swell’d all the music of the swarming shade,  
Robb’d of their tuneful souls, now shiv’ring sat  
On the dead tree, a dull desponding flock—  
With not a brightness waving o’er their plumes,  
And nought save chatt’ring discord in their mouths.”

“ Yet a few months, and this scene will regain its wonted charms,” cried Elizabeth, as she pensively viewed it ; “ but the hopes, the flattering expectations of my heart—will they revive? oh that I had never gone to any distance from my home, and then I should not have had to mourn over their overthrow.”

A gentle sigh immediately behind her caused her to start, and hastily turn round ; and, with emotions impossible to be described, she beheld Delacour bending over the seat she occupied.

A shriek

A shriek of surprise involuntarily escaped her, as, scarcely conscious of what she was about, she started up, and ran towards the house. Her agitation, however, rather retarding her speed, Delacour easily overtook her, and gently seizing her hand, arrested her flight.

“Am I then so hateful, so very hateful an object,” said he, with a look of mingled tenderness and reproach, “that Miss Munro should fly me with terror and disgust? or does her wish to avoid me proceed from resentment? oh, if to the latter, let her only suffer me to explain what my anguish has been at the thoughts of having incurred that resentment, suffer me to explain the circumstances that caused me to do so, and she will, I trust, in some degree, forgive me.”

Elizabeth bowed—she could not speak at the moment, so great was the tumult of her heart, at the delightful hope which these words inspired, of the injustice that had been done her being at length detected.

Delacour, construing her silence in the  
manner

manner most agreeable to himself, and passionately kissing the fair and trembling hand he detained in his, led her back to the seat she had started from, where, throwing himself on the sod beside her, he quickly entered upon the explanation he had taught her to expect, but which, as delicacy induced him to omit some particulars requisite to the illustration of this story, we shall give in our own words, instead of his.

One of Lord O'Sinister's emissaries having overheard the conversation that took place between Elizabeth and her preserver Beerscroft, in the chapel, his Lordship was, by this means, apprized of her becoming the guest of Mrs. Dunbar. To attempt to wrest her from such protection was not to be thought of; but he did, if possible, worse, by immediately setting about endeavouring to poison the mind of Mrs. Dunbar against her.

The agent he employed for this purpose was Lady Lochness—a lady, whose extravagant, or rather vicious propensities, had  
reduced



reduced her to so low an ebb of fortune, that she was as greedy after gain as an usurer; of which her avarice, Lord O'Sinister, who knew her well, and was informed of her being at Black Crag, previous to his arrival in its vicinity, took advantage, to make her one in his schemes against the innocent Elizabeth. He easily contrived to obtain a private interview with her Ladyship, in which he fully explained these to her, and, by means that may be guessed, obtained a positive promise from her, to do every thing in her power likely to further them.

The high opinion which she knew Mrs. Dunbar, owing to her plausible manners, and total ignorance of her real character, entertained of her, made her flatter herself with succeeding as she wished, in her efforts for this purpose.

After artfully introducing a conversation relative to Elizabeth and her family, by a warm panegyric on her beauty, she proceeded to ask Mrs. Dunbar if she knew  
aught

aught of her mother? and, on her replying in the negative, according to her expectations, hesitated not to inform her, but under the seal of secrecy, agreeable to the instructions of his Lordship, who dictated to her all she was to say on the subject, that she had heard, from undoubted authority, but which she was not at liberty to mention, that Mrs. Munro was a woman of very light character, and, notwithstanding the vigilance of her husband, had contrived to instil her own principles into the mind of her daughter.

“As a proof of which,” continued this most artful and abandoned woman, “is the encouragement the young lady gave, or may now be giving, for aught I know to the contrary, to the libertine addresses of that profligate, Lord O’Sinister. He saw her, by chance, at Firgrove, which is, as I suppose you know, in the neighbourhood of her father’s residence, and immediately became enamoured of her; but, concluding that the daughter of such a man as Captain  
Munro

Munro must have been brought up virtuously, and, of course, not to be won by any thing but the semblance of honour—instead of having recourse to any of his old arts of seduction, he contrived a scheme for getting her father out of the way, and introducing himself to her, under a fictitious name, in order to be enabled to offer her his hand. Of his being a wolf in sheep's clothing, the young lady soon received information from a secret friend. The discovery of his baseness, however, caused no alteration in her conduct towards him ; she was too anxious to obtain the independence and gewgaws he had promised her on becoming his, to let it have any influence over her, especially when she reflected that, on matters being cleared up, instead of being sunk in the estimation of the world, she should merely be regarded in the light of a poor betrayed innocent, and, of consequence, not refused admission into the circles she sighed to shine in. In short, but for the unexpected return of her father, she

she

she would have become the self-devoted victim of his Lordship, under the idea that all blame would attach to him ; for she is, I understand, extremely tenacious of her reputation ; owing, no doubt, to her knowing an untainted one essential to figuring in life. What turn the affair has since taken, I know not, neither what brought her into this neighbourhood ; all I know, from the authority already alluded to, is, that she has art enough to deceive any one, since, notwithstanding her real way of thinking, no one can appear more grateful for good advice, or terrified at any danger to her reputation, or impropriety in her conduct being pointed out to her. She is so young, however, that I think one may reasonably hope she is yet reclaimable.—'Tis the idea, indeed, of the benefit she might derive from advice from so respectable a quarter (bowing, as she spoke, to Mrs. Dunbar) that has induced me to make you acquainted with what I heard of her ; for though I have not any personal knowledge

ledge of her father, I yet know sufficient to interest me greatly about him ; and, of course, cannot avoid feeling anxious about what so nearly concerns his happiness, as the conduct of his child."

"If the precepts of such a father have failed of success, I cannot hope that mine would succeed," returned Mrs. Dunbar, at once shocked and astonished by the relation she had been listening to. As soon, however, as the subsiding of the emotions it excited permitted her to reflect coolly, she ceased giving implicit credit to it.

Not that she doubted the veracity of Lady Lochness, neither the motive to which she had ascribed her giving utterance to such a tale of scandal against poor Elizabeth, but that she thought she had been imposed upon ; since, when she considered the youth of Elizabeth, and the sequestered life she had heretofore led, she could scarcely think it possible that she could be the artful, the depraved character, she had been represented. Still, however, she reflected  
that

that she might be so ; but at the same time decided, though not without many debatings with herself on the subject, on not letting any alteration take place in her conduct towards her, except convinced, beyond a doubt, of her depravity.

This decision greatly disappointed and mortified Lady Lochness, and her infamous employer, as they had fully expected that their base allegations against Elizabeth would have been followed by her immediate dismissal from Black Crag; and thus a speedy opportunity afforded his Lordship of endeavouring to get her into his power again.— In a short time, however, they trusted, if they persevered in their attempt to injure her character, they should accomplish their wishes.

The disappointment of Delacour, when, on his return from the boating party, he found Elizabeth gone, and the anxiety he evinced to know the cause of her sudden departure, first betrayed to Mrs. Dunbar the nature of his sentiments for her.



Alarmed by the discovery of these, in consequence of the suspicions which had been introduced into her mind respecting Elizabeth, and which her so precipitately quitting her roof had not tended to lessen, she deemed it an incumbent duty to counsel him not to be too hasty in his plans concerning her.

Her “ambiguous givings out” (for a fear of doing injustice made her unwilling to speak explicitly) so agitated the soul, and inflamed the curiosity of Delacour, that he rested not till he had extorted from her all she wished to conceal. He listened with mingled astonishment and indignation—the respect in which he held Mrs. Dunbar, and which he was perfectly sensible she was entitled to, alone withheld him from reproaching her for giving credit for a moment to the slanders which had been uttered against her whom he adored. He pledged himself to prove that they were the vilest slanders, originating in envy, or  
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the wickedness of Lord O'Sinister, with whose libertine turn he was well acquainted, in consequence of being on very intimate terms with his brother-in law Mr. Beerscroft, who, but not out of any revengeful motive, but merely to prove to the world that the coolness which subsisted between his sister and her Lord was not owing to any defect in her temper, as he tried to insinuate, for the purpose of endeavouring to have his own conduct excused in some degree, never hesitated, to those with whom he was on terms of friendship, to reveal his atrocities.

As a proof of his believing her to have been most cruelly traduced, the impetuous Delacour would instantly have set out for Heathwood, to have made her a tender of his hand, but that this very day, the old Admiral, under whose command he had first served, and who for some time past had been on the superannuated list, had come, in defiance of gout and rheumatism, from his seat, forty miles off, to Black Crag, pur-

posely to pay him a visit, and pass some time in his company.

This attention, which, as a proof of the regard and esteem of a noble heart, would, at any other time, have been most gratifying to the susceptible one of Delacour, now put his patience to the severest test—so anxious was he to give utterance, at the feet of Elizabeth, to the feelings with which she had inspired him, and by so doing, a death-blow to his aunt's doubts respecting her; for he was well convinced her opinion of his principles was too exalted, to allow her to imagine his vows would be offered to any other than a woman of the most unblemished honour.

The beauty of Elizabeth, whom his stopping at Heathwood, in his way to Black Crag, for the purpose of calling on a person who had formerly been in the service of his father, first gave him an opportunity of seeing, made an instantaneous impression on him—such as on discovering, by means of the person above mentioned, who she  
was,

was, induced him to determine on endeavouring to introduce himself to her notice. In pursuance of this determination, he haunted the walks he understood she frequented, and hovered round her habitation until he had succeeded in his wish, but without ever encountering Lord O'Sinister, owing to the great caution of his Lordship.

To him, who, from the innate purity of his taste, the tenderness of his feelings, a blush, a phrase of affability to an inferior, a tear at a moving tale, were (to use the words of an elegant writer) like the Cestus of Cytheræa, unequalled in conferring beauty, the unaffected simplicity of Elizabeth's manner, her sweetness, her gentleness, so indicative of a heart capable of sympathizing with every child of sorrow, had inexpressible charms—such as rendered resistless those with which Nature had bedecked her external appearance, and quickly changed the passionate admirer into the adoring lover.

The morning after the occurrence which introduced him to the notice of Mrs. Munro, he meant to have disclosed his sentiments for her lovely daughter; but, as may be recollected, had no opportunity of carrying this intention into effect, by being denied admission when he called. Inclination prompted him to remain in the village till he had obtained an interview, but he knew he was expected that day at Black Crag, and could not, therefore, think of obeying its dictates, on account of the pain and anxiety he knew he should give to his aunt, if not punctual to the time he had promised to be with her.

On the rapture with which he looked forward to returning to Heathwood, 'tis unnecessary to expatiate; or on the damp that rapture received, when led to relinquish his intention of paying another visit to the mansion of Munro, owing to the deception practised on him by the vile Mrs. Elford, respecting Elizabeth—either on the extacy he felt at the detection

tection of that deception: suffice it to say, that the old Admiral having quitted Black Crag, he proposed also leaving it the day after the masquerade, for Heathwood; but again resigned all intention of ever more visiting that spot, on discovering Elizabeth and Lord O'Sinister at Glengary. After practising so gross a deception, as he was led, from a variety of circumstances, to imagine she had upon his aunt, he could no longer think her innocent, no longer injured by the charges preferred against her. Yes, it now seemed evident to him, that she merited the imputations cast upon her by Lady Lochness—that she was the guilty creature she had represented her—had left Black Crag, and concealed herself in the neighbourhood, solely for the purpose of carrying on her shameful, her degrading correspondence with Lord O'Sinister.—“And yet, if the testimony of looks could be relied on,” he said to himself, as, whilst spite of his resentment and indignation, he was assisting in conveying her from the

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supper-room, his eyes dwelt with even intense admiration on her face, "I should, notwithstanding appearances, pronounce her guiltless."

Doubtful of himself—fearful if he remained much longer near her, he might be betrayed into some proof of tenderness that would give him cause to reproach himself hereafter, with having acted contrary to the dictates of pride and jealous honour, he precipitately quitted the room, as has been already mentioned, on her recovering; but not without an involuntary farewell glance, expressive of the feelings then agonizing his soul; and from that moment exerted himself to the utmost, to try and banish her from his remembrance.

Mrs. M'Tulloch, as she had promised Elizabeth, repaired the next day to Black Crag, in order to deliver her letter to Mrs. Dunbar, and undertake her defence. But the arguments she advanced in her favour were disregarded—Mrs. Dunbar looked upon the story she told her as a fabricated  
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one—an idea that made her feel still more exasperated with Elizabeth : a short time, however, sufficed to make her change this opinion, and do that justice to Elizabeth she merited.

By degrees she became struck with the particularity of her niece's conduct to Delacour (of whom, however, she had too high an opinion to fear, for a moment, his taking advantage of this too evident predilection in his favour), and equally so with the encouragement which Miss Rae, by her conversation, gave to the criminal weakness of her friend.

What this young lady's motive could be, for wishing to see involved in ruin and disgrace, a person for whom she professed so high a friendship, was for some time unfathomable to Mrs. Dunbar. At length the mystery became elucidated, and with it the injury that had been done to Elizabeth.

Ruthven, discovering that Elizabeth had set out for Heathwood the morning after the masquerade, took horse the moment he re-

ceived this intelligence, for the purpose of pursuing her, and endeavouring to recommend himself to her favour.

His career, however, was soon stopped; he had not got a mile from Black Crag, when, owing to the impetuosity with which he rode, he was thrown, and taken up with a fractured leg. About a fortnight after this accident, as Mrs. Dunbar, according to her daily custom, was entering his chamber one morning, for the purpose of making personal enquiries after his health, she was a good deal surprised at hearing his voice, and that of Miss Rae's, loud in argument together. Curiosity, perhaps suspicion, caused her to pause at the door; and she soon heard sufficient, to make her clearly understand how grossly she had been deceived in a recent transaction.

Miss Rae, enraged at the continued coldness of Ruthven, was saying every thing which jealousy and malice could devise, for the purpose of retaliating on him for the mortification he made her suffer;

at once reproaching him with his inconstancy towards herself, and assuring him his libertine passion for Elizabeth would never be successful : and he, in return, irritated by these observations, and bodily suffering, was reviling her for the baseness of her conduct with regard to his wife, and protesting that nothing earthly should keep him from pursuing Elizabeth, the moment he was recovered.

In short, their secret views, and the machinations these had given birth to, became fully developed to Mrs. Dunbar, by the conversation she had thus unexpectedly overheard. The result was, her insisting on the immediate departure of Miss Rae from her mansion ; and directly after, sending for Delacour, to acquaint him with the discovery she had made. Aware, however, of the impetuosity of his temper, of what his feelings would be on the occasion, she would not do more than hint to him, that she had joyful tidings to communicate, until she had received a solemn promise not to  
let

let indignation or resentment transport him into any hostile act. In a triumphant moment she revealed to Delacour what she had heard ; an open letter, which he had picked up in one of the apartments, a few minutes before he received a summons to attend her, from Lord O'Sinister to Lady Lochness, and dropped there by her Ladyship, having proved to him, in the most satisfactory manner, the allegations against Elizabeth being all without foundation, and unfolded to him, besides, the motives to which they were owing.

How extatic would have been the bliss of Delacour at this juncture, at finding the woman, whom he had vainly tried to forget, the pure, the faultless being, he had at first considered her, but that he feared the pride of injured innocence would induce her to reject his renewed addresses ; and knew, even if they were accepted, he could not, for some time, make her his wife ; his paternal inheritance not being yet cleared, without the entire possession  
of

of which, (a perhaps too generous spirit having involved him in some pecuniary difficulties) he could not give her an establishment of her own ; and till he had the power of rendering her completely independent of her family, he could not think of their marriage taking place. A voyage, however, which he was on the point of going to the East Indies, would, he trusted, enable him, on his return, to arrange his affairs ; and, of consequence, gratify the wishes of his heart, should he be so fortunate as to remove the resentment, he made no doubt, Elizabeth now harboured against him, and, on a candid explanation of his situation, obtain a promise of her hand.

He was not of a temper voluntarily to submit to suspense ; besides, he was now under an absolute necessity of being at Portsmouth in a very short time. From the dressing-room, therefore, of Mrs. Dunbar, he hastened to give orders for immediate preparations to be made for his departure



parture from Black Crag; and, owing to the velocity with which he travelled, found himself at Heathwood in less than four hours after he had bidden it adieu.

The feelings which his departure gave birth to in the mind of Mrs. Ruthven, threw her so entirely off her guard, that all she wished, and had meditated with respect to him, became known to almost every individual under the roof of her aunt. The consequence was, that on his recovery, which was slow, and ended in a confirmed lameness, Ruthven took advantage of her guilty passion, to make it a pretext for doing what he had long desired, namely, separating himself for ever from her, and under the conviction that his pursuit after Elizabeth would be unavailing, retiring to the Continent, where we shall drop him entirely; nor say more of his lady, than that after remaining some time longer with her amiable kinswoman, a torment to her, as well as to every other person about her, she

she thought proper to withdraw from Black Crag, and join Lady Lochness, who, on the discovery of her baseness relative to Elizabeth, had been obliged to quit it, and with her repaired to London ; where, after a series of dissipated pursuits, she sunk into an early grave, the victim of unruly passions.

Delacour, alighting at the inn, proceeded straightway towards the habitation of Munro, with an introductory letter from his aunt, expressive also of the happiness she should derive, from an alliance taking place between their families.

His shortest path was through the wood at the rear of the garden ; and, by taking this, he surprised Elizabeth in the manner above related. Ere he had gone through the particulars he had to reveal to her, his fears of finding her inexorable to his supplications for forgiveness, vanished. The timid glances of her now downcast, now half-averted eyes, the warm blushes that mantled her cheek, the tremor of the soft hand he pressed to his throbbing heart,  
all

all convinced him he had no reason to despair.

At length he had the happiness of receiving from her lips the confirmation of his hopes.—“And yet,” cried Elizabeth, with a look of ineffable sweetness, and in a voice that perfectly accorded with it, on pronouncing the pardon he so earnestly implored, “how can those forgive, who have not been offended? for a moment I never ceased to believe, that to the vilest artifices, was owing the prejudice you gave me reason to think you had conceived against me, and of course, could not consider you to blame.”

“How poor, how inadequate is language to express the feelings this goodness inspires me with!” returned Delacour, in the most impassioned accents; “the study of my future life, if so blest as to obtain a favourable answer to my suit, will be to manifest the grateful sense I entertain of it.”

A full disclosure of his wishes followed this declaration. Elizabeth was not surprised—

prised—but she was agitated and confused ; and, for a few minutes, literally lost in a sweet confusion, that precluded her replying to him. On recovering the power of utterance, she referred him to her father for the answer he required.

“ But should he—should your mother—should they be disinclined to bestow you on me,” and his hand trembled almost as much, at the moment, as the fair one it enclosed.

“ My parents have hitherto been most indulgent to my wishes,” replied Elizabeth, but in a timid accent, and with, again, a downcast eye.

“ But if they should not be so now,” cried Delacour, his eyes eagerly pursuing hers, and his arm involuntarily circling her waist, “ for I will, I will, my Elizabeth, put the most flattering construction on what you have just said.”

“ Why then,” returned Elizabeth, but still shunning his ardent glances, “ I will—supplicate them to be equally so now.”

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“ This instant must terminate my suspense,” cried Delacour, starting up ; “ if not fortunate enough to find your father within, I trust you will be able to direct me to him.”

Elizabeth could only blush—a few minutes brought them to the house. They found her father and mother in the parlour. They knew not what to think on beholding Delacour, but, whatever might be the purpose which had brought him to their house, they conceived the hospitality which Elizabeth had experienced from his aunt entitled him to their attention. Accordingly they invited him to spend not only that day with them, but to make their house his abode as long as he remained at Heathwood—an invitation which, it may readily be supposed, he did not decline. After a little desultory conversation, and his informing them that he should be able to enjoy the pleasure of their society only another day, owing to the necessity there was for his being immediately at Portsmouth, he requested the favour of a few minutes private

vate conversation with her father, and was accordingly conducted, by him, into his study.

Delacour was not more tedious in explaining his wishes to the father, than he had been to the daughter, and had the supreme happiness of finding them equally pleasing to both : his character for bravery and worth, the gallant manner in which he had, on several occasions, signalized himself in the service of his King and Country, was previously known to Munro, and had excited a prepossession in his favour, which his appearance confirming, rendered him delighted at the thoughts of an alliance between him and his Elizabeth ; more especially when he reflected on the pangs, he had so much reason to believe, she had suffered on his account. The letter of Mrs. Dunbar was highly gratifying to his feelings. The eulogiums she bestowed on his beloved child, and the sanction she gave to the wishes of her nephew, were alike flattering to his pride and tenderness.

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In a word, he rendered Delacour as happy as Delacour had rendered him, by assuring him his daughter had his free consent to engage herself to him. "But bless me," added he, as if suddenly recollecting himself, and with a laughing air, "here have I disposed of my daughter, without ever once consulting her mother on the subject; well, I don't know that she will absolutely insist on my retracting my promise, but if she should—"

"What, what, my dear Sir," demanded Delacour, in an agitated tone, all eagerness and anxiety, and catching, as he spoke, his hand.

"Why, we'll then try what coaxing will do; and, if that don't succeed, we'll (still more gaily)—but 'tis time enough to threaten when we see cause."

From the study they repaired to the parlour, where they found Mrs. Munro, but no Elizabeth—she had slipt away to her chamber, whilst her mother, surprised, or rather agitated at the request of Delacour, was

was gazing after him and her husband, there to remain 'till obliged again to make her appearance.

“ My dear,” said Munro, addressing his wife, as he stirred up the fire, “ I have been doing something, which entitles me to what, I confess, from you would be a novelty—a lecture.”

“ Indeed !—and pray,” smiling, “ what may that be ?”

“ Giving away something very precious to you, without asking your permission ; but, if dissatisfied with my conduct, Captain Delacour, on whom the gift is bestowed, will, perhaps, out of consideration to my domestic tranquillity, permit me to recal it.”

Mrs. Munro looked earnestly in the countenances of both for a minute. “ Ah !” she then exclaimed, “ if it is what I imagine, with my whole heart I confirm him in the possession of it.”

Her hand was instantly locked between Delacour's, and raised to his lips. “ Yes,”  
cried

cried he, in accents which spoke the fulness of his heart, "Mr. Munro has permitted me to look up with hope to your Elizabeth; may I flatter myself that my assurances, of endeavouring in every instance to render myself deserving of her, will induce you to be equally kind?"

"Her father's fond wish and mine," replied she, "has ever been, that the filial piety which has always marked her conduct towards us, might be rewarded by her union with a person of congenial disposition. In you, I am inclined to believe she has met a kindred spirit; you may readily, therefore, judge whether you have any thing to fear from me."

As soon as the grateful transports excited by this speech, in the mind of Delacour, had a little subsided, Mrs. Munro, at his earnest request, went in quest of her daughter, with whom she returned in a few minutes. Munro advanced to meet them, and taking the hand of the timid and blushing Elizabeth—"Captain Delacour,

Delacour, your hand," said he—after he had briefly explained to her the conversation that had just passed between them.

The hand of Delacour was instantly presented to him, and as instantly joined to Elizabeth's. "In the sight of Heaven," cried Munro, folding their united hands between his, and looking up, while his wife, at a little distance, with tears not to be suppressed, stood contemplating the interesting group—"I solemnly betroth you to each other ; as Heaven attests the contract, so may it also bless and render happy your union. Captain Delacour, I give you my daughter, with no other regret, than that which originates in my inability to prevent her going to your arms a portionless bride."

"Touch not on such a subject," cried Delacour, impatiently, and with a glow upon his cheek, which heightened the animation of his fine countenance ; "she is a treasure in herself—in giving her to me, you render me not only one of the happiest, but most enviable of men."

“ I trust she will ever prove deserving of your disinterested affection ; but, indeed, I have but little, or rather no apprehension, that she will not, for never yet has she disappointed any expectation I formed of her. Take her, Captain Delacour,” resigning her hand into that of her lover, “ take her with my blessing—my best wishes—my prayers for your mutual happiness ; should I not live to witness your union, I shall nevertheless die, rejoicing in the idea of it.”

Of this scene enough ;—suffice it to add, that, for a few hours, a happier set of beings, than were now collected under the roof of Munro, could not have been found ; but then the idea of Delacour’s approaching departure recurring to their recollection, threw a damp on their spirits.

The interest which Delacour had excited in the minds of Mr. and Mrs. Munro, was not inferior to that which they had given birth to in his. Although care for years had pressed heavy upon both, and, for a considerable

considerable period, they had withdrawn from the haunts of fashion, neither anxiety nor seclusion had impaired their powers of pleasing—the polish of high life was still discernible in both, now united with a pleasing familiarity, and simplicity of manners, perfectly according with, and appearing, indeed, to be the result of their present situation.

Munro could still at times exercise that playful humour, which, in the days of his youth and prosperity, had often enabled him to set the table in a roar; and Mrs. Munro could still laugh at, and take pleasure in listening to, anecdotes of the great world. To the abhorrence in which Delacour had always held the inhuman conduct of old Mr. Munro, was now added astonishment at his being capable of discarding such a son—so every way calculated to render him happy, and do honour to his name, as was the father of his Elizabeth; and still further, if possible, was his wish for a union with her heightened, by the amiable



relatives he saw he should acquire by it. He anticipated the delight he should experience, if ever in his power, to compensate them in any degree for the injustice of fortune; and, in his solicitude to do this, found a new stimulus for his adherence to prudence in future.

A party of young people were invited for the evening, and again Munro and his wife had the exquisite felicity of beholding their Elizabeth participating in their amusements, with that cheerfulness which was natural to her.

“ Oh, joy, how magical is thy influence !” silently exclaimed the delighted father, as he contemplated the alteration which a few short hours had made in the beloved of his heart—the rich glow which again suffused the cheek that had so lately worn the sickly hue of melancholy, and the liquid lustre that darted from the eyes, but a few minutes back heavy and dejected.

Munro recollected how he had felt when a lover, and in consequence of this recollection,

lection, left the lovers to themselves a considerable part of the ensuing day. How supreme would have been the happiness of Delacour during these hours, in which he was thus allowed to engross exclusively to himself the attentions of his gentle mistress, but for the thoughts of the separation that was to take place that night ! He verified, by his feelings on this occasion, the remark, that

“ Of all the creatures that exist,  
Man only clogs his happiness with care,  
And while he should enjoy his part of bliss  
With thoughts of what may be, destroys what is.”

The morning was fine, and great part of it was spent in rambling about the environs of the house, through those haunts, endeared by the recollection of having been the scenes where they first met.

On returning from this, it is presumed needless to say delightful ramble, they passed through the chapel, fitted up in the house for the accommodation of Mrs. Munro ;

it was of spacious dimensions, its form octagon, and covered with a soft thick matting; in a deep recess at the farthest end stood the altar, between two gothic windows, chiefly composed of stained glass, and which, from the shadow of intermingled cypresses and willows, nourished by a murmuring rill that crept round their feet, cast on them, only admitted a softened light; all around were vases of rich flowers, shedding an exquisite perfume, and forming a beautiful contrast to the sombre hue of the grey walls.

Delacour involuntarily paused to look about him, remarking as he did, that he had no where seen a place better adapted for the purposes to which it was devoted, namely, prayer and meditation.

“Here,” cried Elizabeth, resting her hand upon the low railing which enclosed the altar—“here,” turning a look of ineffable tenderness upon him, “will the safety of Delacour often be prayed for.”

“And here,” returned he, rapturously  
seizing

seizing her hand, and dropping on one knee, "let him pray that he may never cease to merit your supplications to Heaven for him; but with your image, my Elizabeth, enshrined in his heart, it is impossible he should—for, like the angels that lacquey, we are told, the couch of innocence and virtue, it is calculated to keep far off all thoughts of harm and sin."

As he knelt, Elizabeth drew from her pocket a long plait of her own hair, united with a small heart of agate, and with a smile threw it over his neck.

"This goes with me to my grave," cried Delacour, as, after holding it for some minutes to his lips, he concealed it in his bosom.

At ten o'clock at night the chaise, which was to convey Delacour away, drove to the door—till then the party within had, by struggling with their feelings, maintained an appearance of cheerfulness, but

on its stopping each countenance was in a minute overcast.

Mrs. Munro was the first whom Delacour approached to take leave of; as he affectionately pressed his lips to her hand—"Remember," she softly whispered, "whose happiness you have in your keeping, and let the recollection prevent you from needlessly exposing yourself."

A look of eloquent gratitude was the only reply Delacour was able to make to this speech.

"For once, for once, my Elizabeth," he softly cried, after pressing her cold trembling hands for some minutes in silence to his heart, a silence, perhaps, more expressive than language could have been, "let me be blest by hearing you call me your Delacour."

"My Delacour," faintly articulated Elizabeth—then, after a short pause, "Be—be careful of yourself, for should this be our last meeting, never, never will happiness again be known to Elizabeth."

Delacour

Delacour caught her to his bosom for an instant—he strained her to it—then relinquishing his hold—“Angels watch over you,” he cried, and darted from the room.

In the hall he found Munro, who, in order to be no restraint upon his feelings on this occasion, had repaired thither; he could only, however, wring his hand in silence—his heart was too full to permit him to speak, and to hide its emotions he hurried to the chaise, and in a few minutes lost sight of the habitation of his beloved. On reaching London he merely stopped there for the purpose of visiting Mr. Beerscroft, in order to inform him of the engagement between him and Elizabeth, and conjure him to keep a watchful eye over Lord O’Sinister. “After telling you she is now my betrothed bride,” added he, “it cannot, I am sure, be necessary to expatiate, or even point out the consequences that must ensue from her being

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again



again annoyed by that villainous brother-in-law of yours."

Beerscroft gave him every assurance he could desire on the subject—assurances which Delacour knew him too well to doubt his not attending to.

The tender attentions of her parents, and the correspondence she carried on with Delacour till his ship had sailed, gradually softened the sorrow of Elizabeth for his departure. If at times the thoughts of the dangers he was exposed to became too powerful for her feelings, she always sought retirement until she had regained tranquillity, or at least the semblance of it, that thus her parents might be spared the pain of witnessing her unhappiness, and which, just at this juncture, she was well aware, from a pressure of domestic cares, they could ill have supported.

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## CHAP. IV.

“ A sudden storm did from the south arise,  
And horrid black began to hang the skies ;  
By slow advances loaded clouds ascend,  
And cross the air their lowering front extend ;  
Heav’n’s loud artillery began to play,  
And wrath divine in dreadful peals convey ;  
Darkness and raging winds their terrors join,  
And storms of rain with storms of fire combine ;  
Some run ashore upon the shoaly land,  
Some perish by the rocks, some by the sand.”

DRYD. VIRG.

THE wound of Munro at length assumed so alarming an appearance, that he deemed it expedient to obtain the advice of a professional man of greater celebrity than the one who attended him at Heathwood,

and accordingly, for the purpose of procuring this, took an excursion to —, while Elizabeth was at Glengary, when it was discovered that the bone of his leg was materially injured—a discovery which, destroying his hopes of speedily, if ever, recovering the entire use of it, reduced him to the necessity of relinquishing his adjutancy, as a situation requiring greater exertions than he was then capable of making.

His resignation of it afforded Lord O'Sinister no little pleasure, as it saved him the trouble of planning a scheme to induce him, in one way or other, to give it up, in consequence of his determining not to allow him to retain a situation, calculated to enable him to free himself from the pecuniary obligations under which he had laid him, and thus put it out of his power to pursue the only measure by which he now thought there was a chance of succeeding with Elizabeth—namely, imprisoning him, and making her

compliance with his wishes the price of his enlargement.

Munro was grievously disappointed at finding the resignation of his lately-obtained situation, on which he had built so much, accepted by his Lordship without any offer or promise of another, the supposed benevolence of his Lordship's disposition, united to his knowledge of the disaster which had occasioned him to relinquish it, having induced him to believe he should receive either the one or the other.

He endeavoured, however, to check the feelings this disappointment gave rise to, by reflecting on what his Lordship had promised to do for his son, and the probability there was of his having, from his high rank, and, he concluded, well-known philanthropy, so many, at this juncture, on his list to provide for, as to deprive him for the present of the power of doing any thing for him.

“ Yes, I make no doubt,” cried Munro to himself, as he mused on what he imagined

gined the disposition of the peer to be, "this is the case ; neither that should an opportunity again occur of serving me, which, from the situation he holds in life, one may reasonably hope there will, its being eagerly embraced by him ; till then I must be patient, for however pressing my necessities may be, God forbid I should either attempt or wish to have any one of his claimants displaced on my account. No, no, I know too well, from painful experience, what the pangs of disappointment are, voluntarily to do any thing likely to entail them upon another."

Yet, notwithstanding his hopes of future friendship from Lord O'Sinister, his firm confidence in his sincerity and benevolence, he could not help at times sinking almost into despondency ; nor can this be wondered at, when it is stated, that just at this period his affairs wore a very unpromising aspect, owing to the long neglect which his farm had experienced in consequence of his absence from  
home,

home, and the state in which he had returned to it. He now beheld no probability of being able to discharge any part of his pecuniary obligation for a considerable time to his Lordship; and although he had not the most distant apprehension of his ever distressing him on account of it, yet he considered life was precarious—his noble friend might suddenly be snatched from this world to the enjoyment of that happiness in the next he so truly merited, and the bond might in consequence devolve to some person, not inclined to shew him the same consideration and forbearance he would have done.

These forebodings of evil, however, were not usual with him; he justly reflected they could answer no other end than that of dismaying and dispiriting him from making exertions to ward off what he dreaded; and besides, that to doubt the goodness of Providence is assuredly to deserve not to experience it.

But that calmness and cheerfulness which  
his



his arguments with himself sometimes failed of producing, the consideration of his childrens' now smiling prospects, in a moment restored him to; and "how can I feel unhappy?" was a question he still asked himself whenever they recurred to his recollection, "how complain of the unkindness of fortune, when in their assured happiness I behold my fondest wishes accomplished?"

The prospects of poor Osmond, however, were but fair in appearance, Lord O'Sinister having decided, from the moment of his exposure to Elizabeth, on not putting him in possession of the promised living. Aware, from the unity which subsisted between him and his family, that to render him independent would also be to render his father so, beside, judging, as the villain ever does, from the distrust guilt engenders in the mind, of the truth and sincerity of others by his own, he had not the smallest doubt that Elizabeth would without hesitation expose him to  
the

the scorn and resentment he merited, if her brother was once rendered independent of him; he therefore positively determined that he would not render him so, and also on sending him out of the kingdom, if possible, that he might have nothing to dread from his interference or indignation relative to his sister.

Had he done what he wished, he would, immediately on his return from Glengary, have contrived a pretext for removing him from college, and sending him out of the kingdom; but persuaded, from the light in which he was convinced Elizabeth must now view him, that he could not be too wary, too circumspect in his conduct towards her relatives, he decided on controlling his impatience respecting her, and letting matters proceed as he intended they should have done, when he had nearly made up his mind to giving Osmond the living, trusting that by acting in this manner he should divest her mind of all suspicion of his still harbouring any improper views concerning her, and thus be enabled with  
ease

ease and safety to entangle the innocent Osmond in his snares.

Accordingly, in pursuance of this decision, Osmond remained the usual time at college, was ordained on leaving it, and invited immediately after his ordination to spend a few weeks with his noble patron in London, previous to his induction to the living, which just about this period the public papers had announced being vacated by the death of its old incumbent.

The affectionate heart of Osmond turned at the moment towards home, which he had not visited since the period he quitted it for college, owing to his inability to incur the expence attending a journey to it: conceiving, however, that it was his duty to obey the wishes of his Lordship, that he should act both ungratefully and disrespectfully, if he did not embrace the opportunity thus afforded by his invitation of paying him his personal acknowledgments for the obligations conferred  
on

on him and his family, he proceeded to London, and met with a most gracious reception from the peer.

His Lordship's residence was in Arlington-street, a sumptuous mansion, and fitted up with all the luxurious elegance of modern times.

But though Osmond was little accustomed to any scenes of splendour, but such as his lively imagination had pictured to him, there was nothing which so engrossed and fixed his attention, as the kind and unassuming manners of his patron, his ready acquiescence to the wishes of others, his apparently incessant and anxious solicitude to render every one about him happy.

As he was one of the most wicked, so indeed was he one of the most artful of men, since to have seen him in his own residence, one might well have mistaken him for a benignant spirit, looking about for opportunities of doing good. As Osmond, before he saw him, conceived  
him

him to be one of the best, so now he also considered him one of the most fascinating of men, a man to whom, from the estimation in which he concluded him held, it was an honour to owe an obligation.

Lady O'Sinister and her daughter were both from home; they were seldom, indeed, inmates of the same mansion with his Lordship; their absence, for which he assigned a plausible reason to Osmond, did not prevent his frequently entertaining large parties of both sexes; to these Osmond was introduced in the most flattering manner, as a young gentleman whom he had taken by the hand, for the express purpose of ushering into life; he, besides, took him everywhere with him: and thus, from the elegant society in which he now mixed, Osmond soon acquired that complete polish requisite to appear to advantage, and which, indeed, can only be acquired by a constant intercourse with polite company.

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He was at this period in his two-and-twentieth year ; Nature had been as prodigal of her gifts to him as Fortune had been sparing of her's ; his heart was the seat of every virtue, his temper even and complacent, his understanding excellent, and highly cultivated ; his genius and disposition naturally inclined him to study ; and he was still further stimulated to the pursuit of literature, by the consideration of a good education being the only fortune his father had the power of bestowing on him, and that too not without inconveniencing himself greatly.

In figure, he was tall, slight, and elegantly formed ; his features were of the Roman cast ; his countenance open, lively, and intelligent ; his smile full of sweetness, his dark eyes of sensibility ; yet mild as was their general language, they could gleam with indignation at insolence, or presumption of any description.

Such was Osmond Munro, when he fell into the hands of this arch-deceiver, Lord O'Sinister ;



O'Sinister ; his letters to his family were filled with eulogiums on his Lordship ; he spoke of him in the exaggerated, the enthusiastic terms which gratitude ever makes use of, when lodged in the warm, the glowing heart of youth. Their transport at finding their confidence in the goodness, the friendship of the peer, justified by his conduct towards him, was unspeakable ; and Elizabeth, the amiable Elizabeth, with the credulity natural to youth and innocence, gave him credit for what he knew not, repentance, and persuaded herself, by his conduct to her brother, he wished to make atonement for his trespasses against herself.

A happier being than was Osmond Munro at this period, it would have been a difficult matter, perhaps, to have found ; he saw himself not only introduced into life as the *protégée* of a man whom every one, he imagined, valued and respected ; admired and caressed wherever he went, his gentle and unassuming manners, his

innocent and ingenuous countenance, having done that for him in many instances, which the recommendation and notice of Lord O'Sinister would have failed of doing ; but secure of a handsome independence, he believed, and consequently of the power of rendering the future days of his family happy : it was his intention to invite them to take up their residence with him in the parsonage-house, of which he thought himself so certain, and which, from the information of his Lordship, he understood to be a most delightful residence, a little terrestrial paradise, situated in the very heart of a luxuriant country, and in the midst of an excellent neighbourhood.

Greatly as he enjoyed the parties he at present mixed in, he not unfrequently stole away from these, for the purpose of indulging the agreeable reflections to which the expected meeting between him and his family gave rise to, of dwelling uninterruptedly on the happiness he should experience,

perience, when he found his beloved parents safely housed beneath his roof, diverted from the bitter remembrance of the past, and compensated for the many years of anxiety they had suffered on his account, by his attentions.

“ Six weeks, six little weeks, with wings of down had o’er him flown,” when Osmond found himself alone one day at dinner with Lord O’Sinister. The conversation, after the withdrawing of the attendants, happened to turn on the subject of patronage.

“ I confess,” cried his Lordship, with the soft insinuating smile he generally assumed when about practising any gross deception, as was the case in the present instance, “ there is nothing I am more tenacious of, nothing I more highly value, than that which, by one means or other, has been thrown into my hands; but not from any gratification it affords my pride, but simply from the power it gives me of aiding modest merit, of making amends,  
in

in some degree, for the injustice of fortune, of redressing the injuries which, while she retains the bandage on her eyes, the good and the brave will ever have reason to complain of suffering through her means.

“But, my dear Osmond,” perceiving the credulous and delighted youth, from the fullness of his heart, ready to burst forth into eulogiums on him, “I deserve no plaudit for acting in this manner, since, in doing so, I study my own gratification; and he who, in the actions he performs, has a selfish end in view, merits no eulogium, however meritorious these may be.

“Tastes and opinions differ—some men place their delight in public spectacles, in splendour and ostentation, others in sensual gratifications, and, again, some in the intrigues of cabinets and courts; mine consists in trying to promote the happiness of all around me, in endeavouring to prove that Heaven has not bestowed its gifts on

an ungrateful object—in seeking out objects impelled and driven backward by the adverse hand of fate, and restoring them to their proper places in society—in supporting drooping and persecuted merit, beneath “the proud man’s contumely, the law’s delay, the insolence of office,” and finally affording it the means of triumphing over its enemies. O my dear young friend,” he continued, fixing his eyes upon the swimming ones of Osmond, “I could relate such anecdotes, describe such scenes, as would convince you beyond a doubt, had you one on the subject, which, however, from my knowledge of your disposition, I am convinced you have not, that my pursuits have led me into the right road to happiness.”

“Assuredly,” returned Osmond, “I am indeed well aware of the transport a heart like your’s must experience from contributing to the welfare of others. The greatest object in the universe, says a certain

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tain philosopher, 'is a good man struggling with adversity;' but I perfectly agree with him who says, there is a still greater—the good man who comes to relieve it."

"Come, come, 'tis an awkward thing," said the peer, filling his glass and pushing the decanter to Osmond, "for a man to sit quietly listening to his own praises; I don't know how it was we got into this conversation; let us change it—here's a toast for you, 'May the honest heart never be without a friend to relieve its distress.'

"Amen," silently but fervently ejaculated Osmond, as he emptied his glass.

"And now, young man," resumed his Lordship, putting on one of his most familiar smiles, "permit me to tell you, I shall expect you to use your gun sometimes for me when you go to the rectory, which, if not situated in a country overflowing with milk and honey, is at least in one abounding with game of every description,



scription, against which I presume ere this you have been taught to wage war."

"I confess I have," replied Osmond.

"I am very partial myself to the sports of the field," rejoined the peer; "but *apropos*, whether do you prefer making a longer stay in London, or going down next week to take possession of your living?"

"Since your Lordship allows me a choice, I confess I prefer the latter, so great is my anxiety to see my family."

Lord O'Sinister nodded, and was about replying, when a servant entered with a letter to him; he immediately broke the seal, but had scarcely done so, when his countenance underwent a total change—he bit his lip—started—rose from his chair—resumed it instantly—in a word, did every thing, calculated to excite a belief of his being under the most violent emotion.

Osmond involuntarily dropped a newspaper, which he had taken up whilst his  
Lordship

Lordship was looking over his letter, and almost unconsciously rivetted his looks, full of alarm and anxiety, upon him, convinced, from his seeming agitation, that something most unpleasant had occurred. "And what a pity is it that so good a man should meet with anything to trouble him," he said to himself.

After a silence of some minutes, his Lordship raising his eyes from the letter, turned them upon Osmond, "I see," cried he, "that you are astonished at the emotion I appear in: peruse that," handing the letter to him as he spoke, "and you will then cease to wonder at it; in the meanwhile excuse me for withdrawing; whenever disturbed, I always retire to solitude till I recover myself."

He accordingly withdrew, and Osmond read as follows:—

*To the Right Honourable Lord Viscount  
O'Sinister.*

“ MY LORD,

“ It grieves me to be the herald of ill news, but duty often compels us to act contrary to inclination. A few days ago a law process was served on me by the Bishop of ——’s solicitor, staying your appointment of the Reverend Mr. Osmond Munro to the living of ——, in consequence of his Lordship’s laying claim to the patronage of it as his right. I immediately set about investigating the grounds on which he founded this claim. The result of which investigation, I am truly concerned to state, proved to me beyond a doubt the justice of it, and that therefore to attempt any litigation on the subject, would only be to involve your  
Lordship

Lordship in unnecessary expence and trouble.

“ I have the honour to be,

“ My Lord,

“ Your Lordship’s

“ Most obedient humble servant,

“ ALEX. M’LAW.”

*Lincoln’s Inn,*

*Thursday afternoon.*

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A dimness came over the sight of Osmond as he perused this letter, and ere he had well concluded it, it dropped from his hand. All the pleasing anticipations, the delightful hopes in which he had been indulging, were annihilated by it, and for a few minutes he sunk beneath the shock their demolition gave him.

When a little recovered, through the unrestrained indulgence he gave his feelings, he began to accuse himself of weak-

ness, in having suffered himself to be so completely overpowered by his disappointment.

“ True,” cried he, “ it is a most grievous one, for who can deny that it is a grievous thing to be disappointed of the power of rendering a service to those whom we value more than life? but still it is only such as we are all liable to in this chequered state. Shall I then, knowing this to be the case, dare to murmur at experiencing but the common lot of humanity, as if I had a right to expect some peculiar exemption in my favour; shall I attempt to enjoin others to patience and resignation under adversity, as is one of the most sacred duties of my profession to do, while I suffer myself to sink beneath it? No—no, to be satisfied with myself, my precepts and practice must ever agree. Henceforward, therefore, in order that I may be enabled to fulfil my duty properly, it shall be my study to acquire such a command over myself, as  
shall

shall enable me to meet with fortitude and calmness whatever may ensue. How much do I rejoice that Lord O'Sinister did not witness my recent agitation, since I am convinced the sight of it would have considerably encreased his own! Good and benevolent man, how much does he feel for others! by this time I dare say (and as the idea occurred, his heart, which had felt chilled and heavy, began to regain its wonted heat and animation), he is planning how he may make amends for my present disappointment. Yes, I make no doubt he is," added Osmond, starting from his seat in an ecstasy of revived hope and expectation, and pacing the room with hasty steps—"yes, I feel assured he will not let me launch into the wide ocean of life, without providing me with some certain port to steer to."

His Lordship at this moment re-entered the room, his cheek flushed, and from this circumstance his countenance wearing a still more insidious expression than usual.



“ Well, my dear Osmond,” cried he, hastily approaching him, and extending his hand, “ how goes it with you?—have you yet got over the shock that confounded scrawl,” glancing at the fallen letter, “ must have given you?”

Osmond bowed expressively.

“ Well, I am happy to find you have,” resumed his Lordship, “ since it proves to me your’s is no common mind; for from what I have just felt myself, I can easily conceive what you must have felt: but come, let us resume our seats, for I never stood so much in need of a little of the juice of the grape as I do just now, so much am I cast down and mortified at your being disappointed of a living I had set my heart on seeing you in possession of, not so entirely on account of its intrinsic value, as the comfortable asylum it would have enabled you to afford your family; but let us speak no more of it—to dwell on what we cannot remedy, is, by heightening our vexation, only to render bad worse;

worse ; since the bishop has made out so good a title to it, let him e'en keep it quietly, for there is nothing I so abhor as litigation ; all I shall further say relative to it is, that I trust, since he has deprived me of the power of bestowing it on a worthy man, he will mitigate the pain his having done so occasions, by conferring it on one himself.

“ It is needless, I presume, to say (continued his Lordship, after swallowing a bumper of burgundy), that I should not have suffered what I have done at its being wrested from me, had I any thing of equal value at present in my gift ; if not ordained, I could have provided for you in a thousand different advantageous ways, but I never had much interest in the church ; still, however, I am not quite destitute of the power of serving you ”

At these words the spirits of Osmond, which had begun to droop, became again reanimated.

“ A particular friend of mine ” proceeded,

the peer, "residing in Jamaica, and possessor of considerable estates there, has a living of some value at his disposal ; for which I lately received a letter from him, requesting me to look out for a person worthy of being appointed to ; I obeyed him, but without being successful in the enquiries I made for the purpose, a circumstance which never occurred to my recollection, till a few minutes ago, when it struck me, you perhaps might have no objection to accepting it, rather than continue in a state of idleness, or hunting after a situation."

He paused for a reply, but a reply was not immediately in poor Osmond's power to give, since his feelings alike revolted from accepting this offer, and expressing his repugnance to it, lest his doing so should subject him to the imputation of fears he was a stranger to ; not the climate, but the manners he in general understood prevailing there, and the great unwillingness he was convinced his family would

would feel to his going thither, rendering him averse to the thoughts of visiting Jamaica.

“ I perceive, my young friend,” resumed Lord O’Sinister, after the silence of a few minutes, and with a look of apprehension, (Osmond mistook it for one of tender anxiety) “ that you do not relish the proposal I have just made you ; sincerely sorry am I that I cannot at present make you a more agreeable one, but since I cannot, I think it would be advisable for you to try and combat your feelings in the present instance : if your objection to going to Jamaica results from any apprehension of the climate, I take upon myself to assure you, that, by adhering to your present regular and temperate mode of living, you may bid defiance to it.”

“ No, my Lord, no,” eagerly and warmly, replied Osmond, “ ’tis not any thing of that nature that renders me averse to doing so, but the uneasiness I am aware

the circumstance would occasion my family."

"I cannot see why it should," said his Lordship, "since I think they must be too well informed, at least I am convinced your father must, not to know as well as I do, that provided you act in the manner I have just mentioned, you will be as safe there, with regard to health, as you could possibly be here; however, if this is your only objection to proceeding thither, I promise to take upon myself reconciling your parents to the measure—so come, be candid, my dear fellow; I am obliged to urge you to an expeditious decision, a fleet being on the point of sailing for the West Indies, by which I think it incumbent on me to send out to my friend, who, by the bye, I should have told you is one of the most amiable of men, in whose society it is utterly impossible a person of any mind can feel otherwise than happy and comfortable; a candidate for his living, which, should

should you make up your mind to accept, I beg leave to add, it is not my intention or wish you should retain longer than is necessary for you to save sufficient money to purchase one here, should my exertions to procure you one prove unsuccessful, and which I make no doubt, from what I have heard of it, you will in a very short time be able to do."

This latter argument had the desired effect upon Osmond; the hope it suggested of his being shortly enabled, by accepting the present proposal, to acquire the means of settling himself comfortably in his own country, induced him without further hesitation to accede to it, to the inexpressible joy of the peer, who, in removing him from the kingdom, flattered himself he should remove one of the chief obstacles to his designs on Elizabeth.

The friend, in whose praise he was so lavish, was a gentleman of the law, who, for certain mal-practices he had had recourse to in the service of his Lordship, was  
obliged



obliged to make rather a precipitate retreat from his own country. His Lordship, as in duty bound, furnished him with the means of settling comfortably in another. Jamaica was the place he fixed on for his future residence, and where he had not been long, when he succeeded in obtaining the hand of the widow of a rich planter, possessed of large estates in a remote part of the island. The correspondence he kept up with Lord O'Sinister convincing his Lordship his disposition had undergone no change, he decided on throwing Osmond into his hands, with instructions never to let him escape from them to his native country.

His second prospect of preferment did not afford to Osmond the happiness his first had done, since, unlike that, it afforded him no hope of being able to do any thing immediately for his family, or enjoy their society. The idea of his now probably long separation from them, of the anxiety he was convinced they would suffer

fer while he was away, hung like a dead weight upon his heart, totally depriving him of his spirits.

Lord O'Sinister, but without appearing to notice his melancholy, did every thing in his power to divert it, and prevent reflection, lest it should lead him to retract his promise.

About this period Delacour returned from the expedition on which he had gone to the West Indies. While there, the officer to whom he was next in command died, of course he took possession of his ship, and was confirmed in the command of it on his arrival in England; but at the same time received orders to hold himself in readiness to go out convoy with the East India fleet, then almost ready to sail.

These orders, united to the still deranged state of his affairs, precluded all thoughts of his yet marrying.

Elizabeth, in her reply to the letter he wrote, announcing his return to England, informed him of her brother being then  
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in London, on a visit to Lord O'Sinister, information which afforded him no little pleasure, as he was at that moment on the point of setting out for the metropolis, and had long, from Osmond's near relationship to Elizabeth, and the amiable light in which he was represented, been anxious to become acquainted with him.

Accordingly, he lost no time on his arrival in town, in hastening to pay his compliments to him, more anxious now than ever for an introduction to him, from the solicitude he felt to obtain some intelligence of Lord O'Sinister, which now, except through his means, he despaired of gaining, Beerscroft being absent at this juncture on a visit to a friend in a remote part of the kingdom.

He longed to know whether any thing like repentance had yet touched the hitherto obdurate heart of his Lordship, and which he flattered himself he should be able to gather from the information of Osmond.

Not finding him at home, he left a note,  
requesting

requesting his company the ensuing day to dinner at the Salopian coffee-house.

Osmond was agreeably surprised by this billet, as, from the period he knew of the engagement between Delacour and his sister, he was solicitous for his acquaintance. At the appointed time he waited on him, and met with a reception which at once conciliated his regard, and convinced him his sister had been most happy in her choice.

Delacour was equally pleased with him, pleased to find in the brother of her he loved the very kind of being he would of his own accord have selected for a friend, from the exquisite sensibility, yet spirit and firmness, which it was evident he possessed.

Dinner was served in a private room, that they might be under no restraint. As soon as it was over, and they were left to themselves, Delacour indulged himself with a long conversation about Elizabeth, and then gradually introduced the name of  
Lord

Lord O'Sinister, and congratulated Osmond on the fulfilment of his Lordship's promise respecting him.

Osmond received his congratulations with a dejected look and a melancholy shake of the head: the alarm of suspicion instantly took possession of the mind of Delacour.

"What!" cried he, fastening his dark and keenly penetrating eyes upon the suddenly clouded countenance of poor Osmond, while the muscles of his face began to work, "has he then disappointed you?"

"No, good man, he has not disappointed me," returned Osmond; "yet nevertheless," deeply sighing, as he folded his arms across his breast, "I have met with a disappointment."

"Relative to the living he so long assured you of?" demanded Delacour, in an agitated tone.

"Even so," replied Osmond.

"And by what other means than his  
could

could you have experienced a disappointment respecting it?" asked Delacour; "you really, my friend," he added, with a forced smile, "are a little paradoxical; may I entreat you to be explicit?"

Osmond immediately complied with his request. "So you see," continued he, after he had explained the way in which he had been deprived of the long-expected living, "I have been disappointed, but not through Lord O'Sinister's means. I cannot do justice to the regret he felt at being robbed of the power of fulfilling his promise to me, neither to that he experienced at not being able to offer me at present any better compensation for the provision thus unexpectedly wrested from me, than a living in Jamaica." Here Osmond disclosed all that had recently passed between him and his Lordship.

Ere he had well concluded, the abominable deception which had been practised on him, together with his Lordship's motives for persuading him to quit the kingdom,



dom, became obvious to Delacour; he clearly saw that Lord O'Sinister still meditated the destruction of Elizabeth, and had decided on getting her brother, if possible, out of the way, in order to prevent any interference from him respecting her.

Delacour could not hear of the injuries of a stranger without the liveliest emotion; what his feelings, therefore, were when he beheld any one dear to his regard imposed upon, or in any way ill treated, may easier be conceived than described; the resentment, the indignation, the rage, with which the particulars he heard from Osmond inspired him, were almost too great for controul. Nothing hindered his immediately hastening to Lord O'Sinister, and in the face of day taxing him with the enormity of his conduct, but a dread of the catastrophe the exposure of his guilt might occasion in the family of Munro. What this dread, however, withheld him from doing publicly, he resolved on doing privately,

privately, and in the meanwhile on taking immediate steps for rescuing Osmond from the snares of his Lordship.

“ You asked me just now,” said Osmond, on concluding his short narrative, “ for a worthy man ; I will, therefore, if you please, give you my noble patron, Lord O’Sinister.”

“ D—n him !” involuntarily exclaimed Delacour, striking the table as he spoke, with a violence that caused the glasses and decanters to tingle, and the table to be floated with wine.

Osmond, instantly starting from his chair, retreated a few paces from it, surveying Delacour with an inquiring look of astonishment and anger.

Delacour, immediately recollecting himself, also arose. “ My dear fellow,” cried he, approaching Osmond, and extending his hand, “ I ask ten thousand pardons ; the truth is, at the moment you gave Lord O’Sinister, I was thinking of a most execrable villain, and so transported out  
of

of myself by certain recollections that just then obtruded, that I knew not what I was saying."

Osmond accepted his apology ; a waiter was summoned, and the table being restored to order, they resumed their seats at it.

" So you say," cried Delacour, again turning his penetrating eyes on Osmond, " you do not relish the thoughts of going to Jamaica ?"

" By no means," replied Osmond.

" Why then go ?"

" For a very sufficient reason, because I have no other alternative."

" I beg your pardon, you have ; the chaplaincy of my ship is not yet filled up, and if you will accept it, till something better offers, which I trust may soon be the case, as my connections neither want inclination nor ability to oblige me, I take upon myself procuring it for you."

A more agreeable offer than this could scarcely have been made to Osmond, from  
the

the prospect it afforded of his being for some time associated with Delacour. Notwithstanding this, however, he hesitated accepting it, till he had consulted Lord O'Sinister on the subject, lest otherwise his Lordship should consider himself ill treated.

Delacour, suspecting to what his hesitation was owing, questioned him on the subject, and finding he was not mistaken as to the cause he imputed it to, said he would not press him for a decisive answer till the next morning, when he meant to have the honour of waiting on Lord O'Sinister, for the purpose of removing any objections his Lordship might have to his accepting his offer.

Osmond was pleased to hear this was his intention, as he was not without an apprehension that his Lordship might, in consequence of his not having any great time to look out for another person for the living, be urgent with him to proceed to Jamaica.

The new friends did not part till a late hour; Osmond returned to Arlington-street, in a much happier frame of mind than when he had left it—again alive to hope and pleasing expectation: he and his noble host did not meet until the next morning. Just as they were seated at breakfast, and Osmond was beginning to introduce the subject so near to his heart, Delacour sent in his card, with a request for a private audience with his Lordship.

Lord O'Sinister gave orders for his being shewn into the library, and immediately repaired to him, not in the least doubting his visit being for the purpose of soliciting a favour for some friend or acquaintance, an idea that was highly gratifying to his pride, from the light in which he regarded Delacour.

Expecting this, how great was his mortification and surprise at learning the real purport of his visit!

Delacour, but without betraying Beerscroft, gave him quickly to understand he  
knew

knew the whole of his conduct towards Elizabeth, as well as the detestable projects his designs respecting her had caused him to form against the rest of her family, mentioned the situation he had himself offered to Osmond, for the purpose of rescuing him out of his hands, and finally the engagement subsisting between him and Elizabeth.

“ She has been betrothed to me by her father,” said he, “ in the sight of Heaven, and with the consent of her own heart, of course any insult or injury to her, I shall resent as if offered to myself: but even if this were not the case, still would the knowledge of her being the daughter of a brave and worthy man, and innocent and virtuous herself, be sufficient to arm me in her cause. Oh, my Lord!” with increasing emotion, he added, “ when I think of your being a father yourself, and yet meditating such a blow against the peace of a father, as the ruin of his daughter, and the eternal banishment of his



son, would have been to that of Munro, I cannot find terms adequate to express the indignation, the horror I feel at your conduct."

"Upon my word, I—I do not know what you mean," said his Lordship, but in a faltering voice, and with looks half averted. "I do not know why you should suppose that Mr. Osmond Munro's going to Jamaica should occasion his eternal banishment from this."

"Oh, my Lord!" still more indignantly, cried Delacour, "do not flatter yourself with a hope of being able to impose on me: I have been more than once at Jamaica, and know perfectly well the character of the gentleman to whom you intended to send Osmond Munro; know well, that he has no such living in his gift as you speak of. I advise you, therefore, for your own sake, to urge his going there no longer, since, should you continue to do so, I shall assuredly wave the considerations that at present withhold me  
from

from holding you up to the scorn and abhorrence you merit, and which you would doubtless experience, was your real character known; for dissipated as the world may be, it still is not so depraved as to look with coolness upon crimes like yours: the premeditated destroyer of domestic happiness is, and ever will be, I trust, an object of general detestation. Unhappy man, instead of any longer indulging your vicious inclinations, set about the task of reformation; it is time for it to commence; dismiss your parasites; look in your glass—like your conscience, it will tell you truth—it will shew you grey hairs and wrinkles, that should warn you to repentance, by convincing you the hour of retribution cannot be far distant.”

The confusion and dismay which had seized Lord O'Sinister at the commencement of this harangue, subsided sufficiently ere it was over, to permit him to recollect himself, and enter into a kind of expostulation with Delacour relative to what he

had said; he assured him he did him the greatest injustice, in suspecting him of the enormities he accused him of—tried to persuade him that it was owing to his being over righteous, not over wicked, he had been so aspersed, “since envy does merit like its shade pursue;” and concluded by saying, Mr. Osmond Munro was at liberty to do whatever was most agreeable to himself.

“Then this point being settled,” said Delacour, “I shall take my leave, with assuring you, that the recent conversation could scarcely have been more disagreeable to you than to me: for the sake of many individuals, I trust one of a similar nature may never take place between us.”

He then withdrew; but being a good deal agitated by the recent scene, instead of desiring to see Osmond, left a note, requesting his company as soon as convenient at his lodgings.

Never had any circumstance so mortified, humbled, and enraged Lord O'Sinister,

as Delacour's lecture ; yet not so much on account of the light in which it made him view his character, as the wounds it inflicted on his vanity, wounds which the pangs of jealousy rendered still more corrosive, and the absolute despair he felt of ever possessing Elizabeth, till he recollected the length of time Delacour would be absent from England.

Not doubting his being able in one way or other to elude his vengeance, he resolved on availing himself of his absence to prosecute his designs against Elizabeth, a resolution to which he was now, if possible, more stimulated to persevere in, by a wish of being revenged on Delacour for what he had made him suffer, than even passion for her ; he also decided, lest he should not be able to baffle two champions, on doing something calculated to give him such a hold over Osmond, as should prevent his being molested by him, if, on his return from the East Indies, he discovered his conduct towards his sister.

Accordingly, in pursuance of this latter resolution, on rejoining Osmond in the breakfast-parlour, he insisted, after he had, with a smooth brow, and smiling aspect, congratulated him on meeting with a situation so preferable to the one he had offered to him in Jamaica, on his accepting from him a sufficient sum to equip himself for his intended voyage.

“Nay, don’t let your pride or delicacy be alarmed,” continued he, with an insidious smile, observing the cheeks of Osmond crimson: “I see you are the ditto of your father, too proud to owe a pecuniary obligation to any man; in order, therefore, to quiet your scruples in this instance, I shall not object to your giving me your bond for this trifle,” handing notes to him as he spoke for three hundred pounds.

Osmond was all gratitude for this loan; it had relieved him indeed from a most painful and awkward embarrassment, as he knew not, from the low state of his finances,  
how

how to procure the necessities requisite for his voyage

Lord O'Sinister, apprehensive, if this transaction was known to Delacour, he might suspect his real motives for the loan, and in consequence occasion, perhaps, its immediate return, extorted a promise from Osmond to be silent with regard to it, for which desiring him to be, he made his own delicacy the pretext.

Osmond enclosed a hundred pound note to Heathwood, in a letter explanatory of all that had lately occurred; but was prevented expending much of the sum that remained, by Delacour informing him he could get the things he required just as well at Portsmouth as in London; and where they were no sooner arrived, than he told him he had already provided him with whatever he wanted from his own tradespeople.

The ensuing day the signal for weighing anchor was given; and, in the course of



some hours after, Osmond found himself in company with a numerous fleet, at some distance from the white cliffs of Albion.

Though Osmond had not admired Delacour before, he could not possibly have avoided admiring him now, to such advantage did he appear in discharging his professional duties, his natural spirit and urbanity, all the shining qualities of his mind, having in his present situation ample field for exercise; in a word, he was in every instance what a commanding officer should be, mild but firm, courteous yet reserved; his officers esteemed him, his men adored him, and peace and good fellowship prevailed throughout his ship.

The season being mild, and the weather remarkably fine, a pleasant intercourse was kept up amongst the fleet: they entered the Bay of Biscay, and Osmond and Delacour were going one day to dine on board one of the East Indiamen, when a homeward-bound vessel coming in sight,

Delacour,

Delacour, anxious to send dispatches by it, declined keeping his engagement, but insisted on Osmond's going.

After passing a pleasant day, Osmond was thinking of returning, when a sudden change in the weather compelled him to give up that intention for the present.

The storm, instead of abating, gradually encreased, till its violence became tremendous, and from the mischief it did the vessel, universal terror began to prevail, aggravated by all hope of receiving succour from the rest of the fleet, should it be required, being precluded by the darkness of the night: at length, after several hours of horror, day began to dawn, but only to increase the general consternation, by permitting the vessel to be seen dismantled in every direction, separated entirely from the rest of the fleet, and driving rapidly towards a ridge of rocks on the Spanish coast; and in a short time there were but few on board who did not think their death inevi-

table. Of this number was Osmond, and with fervour he recommended his spirit to the mercy of Him who gave it, and in whose awful presence he imagined himself on the point of appearing; a few tears dropped from him at the moment, for in imagination he heard the frenzied shrieks of his mother and sister, the hollow groans of his father, when tidings of his disastrous fate should reach them.

“Oh, God!” he mentally exclaimed, as his soul sickened at the thoughts of what their sufferings would be on receiving the melancholy intelligence, “support them in the trying hour that brings it to their knowledge; let them not, I conjure you, too acutely feel—too deeply mourn my fate.”

The horrors of the scene surpassed any his imagination had ever pictured to him; the sea rolled tremendously high, the heaving billows, that dashed against the sides of the labouring vessel, threatened every instant to ingulph it; the mingling sounds of the angry elements resembled the doleful

ful shrieks of unquiet spirits ; and issuing from heavy and portentous clouds, the blue and forked lightning now gleamed upon the surface of the troubled deep, now quivered round the vessel, or darted past it, like a threatening meteor from the angry heavens.

At length the ship struck ; the boats were immediately launched, and quickly filled ; but Osmond was not among those they bore from the wreck ; he was an excellent swimmer, and, on finding it impossible to gain a place in either of them, resolved on committing himself to the deep, and accordingly plunged into it.

After contending some time with the waves, his strength became exhausted, and he was quietly resigning himself to the fate that seemed inevitable, when a wave suddenly raised him up, and threw him on a rock. For a few minutes he lay incapable of motion, then coming a little to himself, and perceiving the dangerous situation he was in, he made an effort to clamber  
ber.

ber higher up, and, though not without the utmost difficulty, succeeded in nearly reaching the summit.

Here he again lay some time outstretched and motionless, completely overcome by fatigue and agitation. When again able to raise his head, he cast a look of mingled hope and apprehension towards the sea; the wreck was still in sight, but no other vessel; and in which many of the crew and passengers still remained, for whose safety the heart of Osmond became agonized.

“Good God!” he almost frantically exclaimed, “is there no way of saving them?” He looked eagerly towards the land, but though he beheld an extensive tract of country, he saw not a human being.

That there were inhabitants near the coast, he could not, however, avoid thinking; and flattering himself he should be able by his supplications to induce them to make an effort for the preservation of his fellow-sufferers, he descended the rock as  
speedily

speedily as possible, and on getting, though not without very great difficulty and danger, over some shallows and sandy ridges, which divided it from the main land, struck into a path that appeared to be a beaten one, and was separated from the open beach by a series of beetling cliffs, in which a yawning chasm here and there afforded him an opportunity of still seeing the element, which was so near becoming his tomb.

“Can I better manifest my gratitude for my narrow escape,” he said to himself, as humanity and benevolence, spite of bruises, sickness, and weariness, impelled him forward, “than by straining every nerve—nay, risking life itself, for the sake of so many of my fellow-creatures.”

He tried for his purse, and had the satisfaction of finding it still within his pocket, as, by having the means of rewarding in some degree the exertions he required, he trusted he should not solicit them in vain.

The



The signals of distress, which the vessel had commenced firing from the moment it was in danger, now became more frequent; but in vain did the flash of the guns gleam upon the waves—in vain did the hollow cliffs reverberate their loud report—no one approached the shore.

At length, a long interval ensued without their being repeated, and despair, equal to that which he imputed their cessation. took possession of the heart of Osmond—he dreaded glancing towards the sea; his incertitude, however, in a little time became too agonizing to be borne—he rushed forward to an aperture in the rocks—he shrieked—the vessel was scarcely perceptible—and the next instant two tremendous waves came rolling towards it—they met, they mingled, and overwhelmed it for ever from his sight.

“ Oh God !” exclaimed Osmond, as with a deep groan he sunk fainting on the sand.

On regaining his sensibility, he involuntarily raised himself from the ground,  
and

and was somewhat pleased and surprised as he did so, to perceive a little sun-burnt black-eyed boy, about six years old, standing beside him, with a countenance full of curiosity.

Osmond had learned a little Spanish from his mother, and, as he patted the head of the smiling child, addressed him in that language, desiring to know whether there was any habitation at hand.

The child listened to him attentively, but, on his ceasing to speak, gave him to understand he did not comprehend him, and thus caused Osmond to recollect, that the Spanish tongue in its purity was but little known in the province of Biscay, in which he then was—recollecting, however, at the same time, the constant intercourse that was kept up between the Biscayners and the inhabitants of the other side of the Pyrenees, and conceiving from this circumstance he might know something of French, he tried him in that language.

Again,

Again, however, the child shook his head, but at the same moment laughed and clapped his hands, as if much delighted; then suddenly laying hold of Osmond's arm, pointed to a little distance from them; and Osmond pursuing the direction of his finger, beheld an elderly man, among the rocks drawing a net to shore.

He immediately approached him, and inferring, from the significant gestures of the child, that he understood French, accosted him in it, and had the happiness of not finding himself mistaken.

The man returned his salutation with much courtesy, and suspending his labour, turned an attentive ear to the relation Osmond proceeded to give him, of the dreadful catastrophe which had thrown him upon his coast; and on his concluding, said, with a melancholy look, "that he had the heartfelt anguish of witnessing it;" adding, "that if any hopes had been entertained of being able to save the sufferers,

ferers,

ferers, efforts would have been made for the purpose."

"I see, my friend," cried Osmond, "I have been fortunate in meeting with you; after what I have told you, I am convinced it is unnecessary to tell you I need repose, either, from the manner in which you have expressed yourself, to use entreaty with you to assist me in obtaining it."

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## CHAP. V.

" Since every man who lives is born to die,  
And none can boast sincere felicity,  
With equal mind what happens let us bear,  
Not joy nor grieve too much for things beyond our care.  
Like pilgrims to th' appointed place we 'tend,  
The world's an inn, and death the journey's end.  
Ev'n kings but play, and when their part is done,  
Some other, worse or better, mount the throne."

DRYD. PAL. and ART.

" TRUE, Signor," replied the fisherman, after what you have gone through, you must, indeed, stand in need of rest, and God forbid that I did not render you every assistance in my power. The nearest inn is at Santillana, about three leagues from this; but if you can put up with  
homely

homely accommodation, I can give you a lodging in my cottage hard by, as you may perceive, the smoke which rises above yonder clump of chesnut trees proceeding from it.

Osmond, gladly as well as gratefully, accepted this offer, there being an air of good-nature and honesty about the man, that rendered him pleased at the thoughts of obtaining shelter from him.

As he stood waiting beside him till he had hauled in his net, he enquired, but with fear and trembling, whether he could tell him any thing of the boats that had been launched from the wreck?

“Don’t ask me, Signor,” was the reply.

“Ah, then,” exclaimed Osmond, clasping his hands together, “I see how it is.”

“We must submit to the will of Heaven,” returned the other.

“Tell me—tell me,” cried Osmond, grasping him by the arm, “are you positive of their fate?”

“Well, Signor, since so anxious to know,



know, I will tell you, though sore against my inclination, for I see you are in sufficient trouble already ; the boats bulged a little way from the wreck, and all on board perished."

" All !—all !" repeated Osmond, in a deep and hollow tone, and with a death-like paleness—" all !—all !" recoiling a few paces.

" Come, come, Signor," said the fisherman, in a soothing voice, " you should be all gratitude for your own escape."

" I am—I am truly grateful for it, my friend ; but," with a burst of sorrow, " I should deem myself unworthy of the life which has been so wonderfully preserved, did joy for its preservation prevent me feeling what I now do. Those whom I mourn I was yesterday rejoicing with. Brave and generous spirits !" he exclaimed, with hands and eyes upraised, " happy be your rest, glorious your memories ! may the divine Being, who has so suddenly snatched  
you

you hence, shed consolation over the hearts of those you have left to mourn you!"

The fisherman having by this time drawn in his net, now took him by the arm, and led him to his cottage, to which his grandson, the little boy, who had pointed him out to Osmond, tripped before, to apprise his grandmother of the guest she was about having.

Osmond's reception from her was of the most hospitable nature; he was too much exhausted, however, to be able to partake of the food she set before him; and as soon as he had taken a little diluted brandy, as a restorative, requested to be shewn to a place where he might lie down.

He was accordingly conducted by his host up a few stairs to a bed-chamber, where, as soon as he was accommodated with dry linen, he was left to his repose; fatigue soon closed his eyes; but though his sleep was long, he awoke from it,  
owing

owing to the anguish of his mind, without being in the least refreshed by it.

Besides being impressed with the deepest grief and horror by the recent catastrophe, his mind was agonized with apprehensions for the safety of Delacour. Unable to endure his torturing reflections, he hastily arose, and dressing himself in the dry clothes which his host, the good Guipuscoa, had left beside the bed, descended to the lower apartment, where he found him and his wife busily employed preparing supper.

Though still disinclined to food, he was so thoroughly convinced, from the manner in which he was pressed to partake of their fare, he should give pain if he refused, that he forced himself to do so. While at table, he enquired of Guipuscoa the likeliest place for obtaining a passage to England, to which kingdom he resolved on returning as soon as possible, and was informed Santillana: he then entreated

him to add to the obligations he had already, by his kindness and hospitality, conferred on him, by sending some one there the next morning, to enquire when a vessel would sail, and procure him a few necessities ; and becoming still more pleased with him and his wife, proceeded to ask, whether, if unable to obtain an immediate passage, he would have any objection to letting him remain under his roof till then ?

“Not the least,” was the instantaneous reply of both Guipuscoa and his wife, who, as well as her husband, pretty well understood him; on the contrary, they should be happy to have him remain with them, as they thought he would much sooner recover his strength and spirits in their quiet cottage, the only inmates of which consisted of themselves and their little grandson, than amidst the noise and bustle of Santillana.

Osmond having previously given Gui-  
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puscoa ten guineas for the purchases he required at Santillana, retired to bed somewhat composed, from the hope he now entertained of being speedily on his way back to England, and the arrangement he had made with Guipuscoa ; it was soothing, it was consolatory to him, to think he was with beings appearing to take an interest in his fate. Hitherto accustomed only to the soft and gentle offices of friendship, the tender endearments of love, to attention, and affection on every side, he was well aware how dreadfully the anguish of the present hour would have been aggravated, had he been cast among strangers incapable of sympathizing in his sufferings. Since destined to meet with such a misfortune, he blessed Providence that it had befallen him in a place so famed for hospitality and humanity as Biscay ; in short, by reflecting that his situation might have been much worse, he reconciled himself to its not being much better.

The

The next morning, just as he opened his eyes, Guipuscoa entered the chamber, with the things he had procured him at Santillana, and the transporting tidings of the fleet he was so interested about being seen by a brig just come into port there, steering in safety through the bay.

This intelligence had an immediate effect upon Osmond—an oppressive weight was instantly removed from his heart—the ashy paleness of his cheek vanished—his heavy and half-closed eyes brightened and dilated—his step again became firm and elastic.

As soon as the extacy it occasioned him had a little subsided, he learned that no vessel was expected to sail from Santillana for England in less than a month.

This information would have chagrined him much, but for that which had preceded it; rejoicing as he did at the removal of the apprehensions he had entertained for the safety of Delacour and his brave companions, there was nothing almost at the moment immediately con-



cerning himself, which could materially have affected him.

Guipuscoa delivered him the purchases which had been made for him, and which came to a less sum than he had received ; Osmond, however, not only refused the overplus, but insisted on his acceptance of five guineas.

Guipuscoa expressed himself greatly surprised at his thinking so much of the kindness he had experienced from him ; “ for surely, Signor,” observed he, “ ’tis only such as a poor shipwrecked stranger might be sure of meeting in any part of the civilized world.”

“ For the sake of humanity I will hope so, my friend,” replied Osmond ; “ but the idea, that elsewhere I might have met with similar kindness cannot lessen my gratitude for that I have experienced from you ; he would be unworthy of a favour, who made light of one, from the consideration of its being only such as another might have conferred on him.”

The

The revolution in his feelings enabled Osmond to do greater justice to his breakfast than he had done to his supper ; and in the course of another day, owing to the kind and unremitting attentions of his host and hostess, and the tranquillity diffused throughout his mind by the knowledge of Delacour's safety, and the pleasing hopes he entertained of finding Lord O'Sinister as well inclined as ever to serve him on his return to England, found himself sufficiently recovered to take a ramble about the environs of Guipuscoa's cottage.

He was an enthusiastic admirer of the scenery of Nature, particularly of such as displayed those bold and prominent features, that at once arrest the attention, and furnish the imagination with new images. The grand and the sublime, however, did not entirely engross his admiration—the lowly violet shared it with the branching tree, whose root it tufted—the sterile rock, with the cultured hill, bedecked with flowering umbrage—the winding valley,

with the cloud-capt mountain fading into ether.

In all he saw, he traced a hand divine, and was therefore furnished by all with "food for meditation," with incentives to praise and worship him, the lowest of whose works proclaim his goodness beyond thought and power divine.

How any mind in the least enlightened could contemplate the wonders of creation, the various blessings with which it abounds for man, without feeling gratitude and devotion to the Creator, was a lasting source of astonishment to Osmond, such as sometimes inclined him to believe this could not be the case; yes, often, from the elevated feelings of his own mind, he was almost tempted to think it impossible that any being endued with intellect could gaze upon the glorious canopy extended over him—could tread upon the verdant carpeting spread beneath his feet—could partake of the manifold fruits of the earth—could rest beneath the shadow of the trees,  
nourished

nourished, as if purposely to afford him shelter, by the dews of heaven, and luxuriate, in the grateful changes of the seasons, without thinking of and magnifying the Author of all.

Osmond was, in short, one of those for whom

“ Lo, not an hedge-row hawthorn blows,  
Or humble harebell paints the plain,  
Or valley winds, or fountain flows,  
Or purple heath is ting’d in vain.

For such the rivers dash the foaming tides,  
The mountain swells, the dale subsides ;  
Even thriftless furze detains their wand’ring sight,  
And the rough barren rock grows pregnant with delight.”

Though naturally lively, and animated in the extreme, he nevertheless was at times inclined, as characters like his, endowed with exquisite sensibility, almost ever are, to melancholy and lonely musings; he delighted sometimes to abstract himself from society, to plunge into the gloom of vast embowering shades, for the purpose

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pose

pose of indulging in those waking dreams, at once so delicious and peculiar to feeling and to genius.

The scenery by which he was now surrounded was perfectly adapted to his taste—a happy mixture of sea and land, hill and valley, wood and water, wearing just a sufficient air of wildness, to excite ideas of the sublime.

The hamlet in which he had found refuge, consisted of a number of cottages scattered amongst deep hollows, and o'er the hills they intersected, and which enclosed for a considerable way on either side a broad deep road, open to the beach, and winding away amidst gradually aspiring mountains, crowned with stately forests, or covered with cantabrian heath, gorze, and impenetrable thickets of the shrub called argoma, into the heart of the country: an old gothic-looking church, in the midst of a spacious grass-grown enclosure, was the only edifice of any consequence in it; neatness and simplicity alone distinguished the

the others, truly gratifying to the eye of benevolence, from the assurance they gave of the comfort and happiness of the inhabitants.

From all he saw, from all he heard, Osmond was convinced that here, if any where, both were to be found without alloy. But how could it be otherwise, he considered, where nature and reason were the guides, where enervating luxury and frivolous dissipation still remained unknown?

In the hamlet where he lodged, and he understood the same to be the case throughout the province, the hour of labour over, the young men and women, the former well built and active, like all mountaineers, the latter tall, light, and merry, their garb neat and pastoral, their hair falling in long plaits down their backs, their heads ornamented with a veil, or handkerchief, twisted round them in a very coquetish and becoming manner, assembled upon some pleasant spot among the rocks, to dance to the sound of



the pipe and tabor, while the more aged amused themselves with looking on, and preparing refreshments.

Osmond more than once accompanied his host to be a spectator of their amusements, and more than once was invited by the intelligent dark eyes of the young female cottagers to join in the dance, but from which he was still withheld by painful remembrances; though he could return their smiles and their glances, worlds could not have induced him to dance within sight of the waves which had proved fatal to so many gallant spirits.

Not unfrequently the sight of the waves awakened reflections that obliged him to steal away from the crowd. On those occasions he generally wandered up the road amidst the mountains, or struck into some of the rich and variegated woods of oak, beech, and chesnut, which shaded their acclivities, and partially screened the corn fields, that extended in various directions o'er their summits.

But the gaiety which he was thus at times,  
owing

owing to the sudden obtrusion of painful thoughts, compelled to fly from, was notwithstanding delightful to him, from the proof it afforded of the happiness of so many of his fellow-creatures; with an exquisite sensation he listened to its softened sounds, and hoped such might ever be the prevailing ones in this happy quarter.

He had been about a week an inmate of the fisherman's cottage, and was returning to it one morning from a long ramble, when his attention was attracted by a number of both sexes assembled in the middle of the village, evidently in great consternation. From his ignorance of the language, however, not being able to make out the cause of this, he proceeded homeward, after pausing for a minute or two to observe them, and was followed by Ines, his hostess, who, from the midst of the crowd, had espied him. Of her he enquired the cause of the tumult; and, in her broken French, received the following particulars:

“ You have taken notice, I presume, Signor, of the great mount in our chapel-yard?”

“ Yes, I have not only noticed, but more than once clambered up it, to have a better view of the adjacent country; ’tis a place of interment, I presume?”

“ It has been, Signor, but not for a considerable period: it is, as you imagined, not only hollow within, but of immense depth.—There came, as the story goes, a hundred or two years ago, two famous warriors to this village, for the purpose of sea-bathing. They had not been long here, when one of them sickened and died. On the day on which he was to be buried, a large body of soldiers made their appearance, and broke an opening into the cave, for the purpose of interring the body there.

“ Amongst many other strange things they did on this occasion, the country people were not a little astonished at seeing them bury a quantity of provisions,  
both

both for man and beast, along with the body; and still more, as you may suppose, at seeing the other warrior, armed cap-a-pee, and mounted on his horse, descend into the vault, and immediately after the entrance was closed up.

“ For this strange and unnatural act, the soldiers accounted by saying, that, owing to some particular circumstance, the two warriors had many years before taken a solemn vow, whether living or dead, to be interred at the same moment; and that the provisions which had been deposited in the vault, were for the purpose of keeping the survivor alive for a certain time, and thus enabling him, like an honourable Knight as he was, to watch over, and prevent the body of his friend from being entered by any one of the evil spirits, or enchanter, against whom they had both been so long waging war, lest, if possession was taken of it by one of these, it might be made to undo all the great and glorious things it had achieved in life,

while animated by its own good spirit.—The soldiers moreover commanded that the vault should not to be opened again, threatening the inhabitants of this hamlet with misery of every description, if they ever permitted it to be so.

“This threatening had the desired effect. Generation after generation has passed away, without any one thinking of acting in defiance of it. The villagers, therefore, can no otherwise account for the doleful cries which, in the course of this morning, have repeatedly been heard from the tomb of the warriors, than by supposing some one or more of the evil spirits, or enchanter, they so annoyed while living, have at length obtained access to it, for the purpose of being revenged for all they made them suffer.”

“What, revenged on a parcel of bones!” demanded Osmond, laughing at the simplicity and superstition of the good woman.

“Yes, Signor,” she replied, “by taking possession of them; for the bones  
may

may still be sufficiently connected to afford them a habitation; at least, such is the opinion of an old woman, who lives in yonder wood; and she advises, in order to have an end put to the wicked projects of these said evil spirits, or enchanter, that some one should enter the cave, for the purpose of dismembering the skeletons, in such a manner that nothing could lodge within them; but as yet, no one has been found hardy enough to undertake the business."

"Well," said Osmond, not doubting but that some unfortunate creature had fallen into the cave, to whom, if immediate assistance was not rendered, death might be the consequence, "I have not the least objection to volunteer my services on this occasion."

"Is it possible, Signor?" cried Ines, in a joyful accent.

"It is very true," replied Osmond.—

"Where is your husband?"

"With the rest of the villagers, Signor."

"And



“And is he entirely of their way of thinking with regard to the present affair?”

“Why, I don’t know, Signor. I rather believe he is at a loss what to think.”

“Well, hasten,” said Osmord, “and make known my offer.”

Ines obeyed, and presently returned with Guipuscoa, and several of the other villagers, equally surprised and delighted at having found a voluntary champion, since, in the light of one they could not help viewing the person who consented to enter the cave, from the smart scuffle, they were convinced, he would have within it.

Osmord having provided himself with a bottle of vinegar and another of brandy, proceeded to the cave, and descended into it by means of a ladder, passed through an aperture, discovered towards the summit, followed by Guipuscoa, who, notwithstanding his disinclination to the adventure, could not think of letting a person, so immediately under his protection, as he  
con-

conceived Osmond, enter into any danger he would not himself share.

Osmond, on reaching the bottom of the cavern, paused, in order to look around him; but the light emanating from a lantern he carried, was too faint to permit him to see to any distance. He therefore began slowly to advance, closely followed by his host.

After proceeding some way, he was beginning to imagine himself mistaken with regard to the conjecture which had induced him to enter it, in consequence of neither hearing or seeing any one, when a faint moan reached his ear, to the infinite terror of Guipuscoa, as was evident from his crossing himself, and making an immediate movement towards the ladder; whilst Osmond hastened to the spot, whence the distressing sound proceeded, and discovered a man stretched upon the ground, with his face upwards, and from the deadly paleness of which, united to his eyes being closed, Osmond at the first glance would

have been tempted to believe him dead, but for a quivering motion he saw about his lips.

Having, by the coldness and dampness of his forehead, ascertained his being in a swoon, and at the same moment perceived one of his hands bleeding, he called to Guipuscoa for assistance, which, his superstitious terror being somewhat subdued by learning the object for whom it was required, he approached to give with great readiness.

While he bound up the wound, Osmond rubbed the temples of the poor sufferer with the vinegar he had so luckily brought with him, and occasionally held it to his nostrils. In a little while he had the satisfaction of perceiving him move, and open his eyes, but which he almost instantly closed again, as if completely overcome by weakness. It now occurred to Osmond that he had probably been a long time in the cavern; and that from the consequent exhaustion of his frame, owing to want of food,

food, fatal consequences might ensue, if removed thence, till he had, in some degree, been recruited by nourishment.

This surmise being communicated to Guipuscoa, he produced some biscuit, which being sopped in brandy, and gradually insinuated between the lips of the stranger, by degrees had the desired effect of restoring him to some degree of warmth and animation: in a little while he again opened his eyes, and after wildly staring about him for a minute, enquired in Italian, in which language Osmond was perfectly conversant, where he then was?

“Till you obtain the repose you so much require, be satisfied, I entreat you, with knowing,” said Osmond, “that you are in safe and honourable hands.”

The stranger slightly bowed his head, and being raised from the ground by Osmond and Guipuscoa, was, between them, assisted up the ladder; but great as was the difficulty they found in getting him out of  
the

the tomb, they found still greater in getting him through the crowd assembled round it, so anxious were the villagers to learn who he was, and what had brought him there.

That he was a person of no common note, Osmond was convinced from the richness of his habiliments. He appeared about his own age; and though not remarkably handsome, had something extremely interesting in his looks.

On reaching the habitation of Guipuscoa, Osmond put him into possession of his own bed; and after giving him a little warm and diluted brandy, left him to his repose. On descending to the lower apartment, he felt himself so oppressed with a headache, owing to the foul and damp atmosphere he had breathed in the cavern, that he was under the necessity of going into the air, but informed Ines of the road he meant to pursue, that in case the stranger awoke ere his return, and wished to see him, there might be no delay in finding them.

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He was absent about an hour, during which his thoughts were occupied in reflecting on the strange incidents that sometimes occur in life, when he heard himself called by his hostess: he immediately hastened to her, and learned that the stranger had risen, and enquired for him.

“When first he began to speak to us, Signor,” said she, “we did not understand him, which perceiving, he had recourse to French. He told us a great deal about himself, but which, as he will doubtless tell you the same, I shall not repeat. He also asked a number of questions about you, which we answered to the best of our ability, and he seems quite impatient to see you, which, to be sure, one can’t wonder at, since, under Heaven, you have been the preserver of his life. Poor gentleman, what a piteous death would his have been, had he been left to perish in the tomb of the warriors!”

On entering the cottage, Osmond found  
the



the stranger seated at a table, with refreshments before him, and Guipuscoa attending.

“Noble, Sir,” cried Ines, hastily advancing before Osmond, and curtseying low, “here is the gentleman you wanted to see.”

“Ah! how unnecessary to tell me so,” returned the stranger with vivacity, yet all the characteristic softness of the Italian—“ah! how unnecessary,” rising as he spoke, “since I well recollect, and ever shall, that face of true benevolence! O, my dear Sir,” advancing to Osmond, and taking him by the hand, “words are inadequate to express my feelings on the present occasion—the gratitude I feel for the exertions you made to restore me to myself; but for you, I should, in all probability, have fallen a victim to the lingering tortures of famine. What will not be the gratitude of my relations and friends, when they learn the obligations I owe you: add to these, I implore you, by giving them a personal opportunity of testifying the  
same.

same. These worthy folks," glancing at Guipuscoa and his wife "have informed me of the misfortune you met with; accompany me, therefore, I entreat you, from hence, and remain with me till you can conveniently return to your own country. In the name of my family, I invite you to the Castle of Acerenza, taking upon myself to assure you, that as the preserver, the guardian angel of its heir, were you less qualified than I now perceive you are, to conciliate esteem and admiration, still would every attention, calculated to render you happy, be paid you there. You may possibly have heard of the ancient and illustrious house of Placentia, in Italy:—to prove to you, that with respect to rank, I am not unworthy of the favour I solicit, permit me to inform you, I am the representative of that house."

Osmond bowed, and expressed himself highly flattered by the anxiety his Lordship manifested for his company; and which nothing, he assured him, but his own

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to return to his native country, should have prevented his gratifying.

“Nay,” replied the Count, “that cannot possibly be an obstacle, for I have enquired into all matters, and learnt that you cannot obtain a passage from Santillana for England in less than three weeks at soonest; so that there is nothing but want of inclination to prevent your passing a little time with me in Italy: perhaps you may be induced to do so, when I inform you that Acerenza, whither I purpose returning by sea, in order to avoid the trouble and fatigue of a land-journey, is contiguous to the Bay of Tarento, whence there are continual opportunities of embarking for England.”

This latter assertion had the wished-for effect upon Osmond; when he found his return home would not be retarded by his accepting the polite and pressing invitation of the Count, he ceased to have any hesitation on the subject. The prepossession

session he had conceived in his Lordship's favour making him anxious to enjoy a little of his society, and the descriptions he had received of Italy, to see something of it.

His compliance with his request threw the Count into raptures that were absolutely extravagant; and Osmond soon perceived he was one of those characters that feel nothing in moderation. His animated looks on the occasion formed a striking contrast to the clouded ones of Guipuscoa and his wife, owing to their chagrin at the thoughts of losing their young guest, so great a favourite had he become with them.

Osmond made a remark in Italian to the Count on the circumstance.

“Ah, dear, worthy, precious, inestimable souls!” instantly exclaimed the Count, turning with quickness from Osmond, and placing himself between them: “yes, I confess,” addressing himself to them, and taking (having but one hand to use) first Ines's, then her husband's, “I am about robbing you of your amiable guest; to reconcile you to such a measure is not, I

am certain, in my power; do not therefore be offended, by supposing I offer you this (pulling out a richly decorated and weighty purse) from any other motive than gratitude."

Guipuscoa, with a shake of the head, positively refused accepting the proffered gift, and Ines followed his example.

"Very well, very well," cried the Count, "I shan't press the matter. I shall only say that you accept it, or the next minute sees it committed to the waves."

"Why, to be sure your Lordship could never think of such a thing," said Ines, but in rather an apprehensive tone, and sidelining towards the door.

"As sure as I have just risen from the grave," returned the Count.

"Oh then, if that be the case," cried Ines, "why, Guipuscoa, rather than let him fling it to the fishes, to which it can do no good——"

"You would have him fling it into your lap," interrupted her husband. "Well, well, if he must fling it away, why, let him do  
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do so; but I would much rather see it returned to his own pocket; for I see nothing we have done to merit such a reward as he offers."

"Every thing! every thing, my noble fellow!" exclaimed the Count, first dropping his purse into the hand of Ines, and then clapping him on the back. "In the first place, were you not kind to my guardian angel here? and, in the second, did you not exert yourself to prevent my soul flying away, and leaving my body to be returned to the tomb of your warriors—which, by the bye, I wish, my good friend, had been transported to the top of Mount Teneriffe, ere I came into its neighbourhood? for, deuce take me if I believe Apollo himself received a greater shock in his tumble from the celestial regions above, than I did from mine into the infernal regions below."

He then, on Osmond's expressing a wish to be acquainted with the particulars of his recent disaster, proceeded to relate, that



he left Santillana, where he had been lodging some time, the middle of the preceding day, for the purpose of taking a stroll about its romantic environs; that charmed with their beauty, he wandered on almost unconsciously till he came to the churchyard, and in scrambling up the mount where the old warriors were interred, in order to have a more extensive view of the adjacent country, either stumbled upon, or made himself a chasm in it, through which he fell; that, for a considerable while after, he was so stunned by his fall, as to be unable to make any effort to have himself extricated from his disagreeable situation; and that soon after he had regained the use of his faculties, he was again deprived of them, by pain and weakness.

His short story finished, he again addressed Guipuscoa, intreating him to have the goodness to send some one immediately to Santillana, for the purpose of procuring a carriage, and quieting the apprehensions of a servant, whom he had left

left there, and, by this time, supposed in absolute despair about him.

The good-natured Guipuscoa lost no time in complying with his request. On his return from procuring a messenger, he assisted his wife in preparing dinner, of which the Count partook, with Osmond, conversing all the time with a vivacity that, all things considered, caused a degree of surprise to Osmond, which he could not forbear expressing; but in terms which evidently proved his supposing it to proceed from the Count's possessing a more than ordinary steadiness of mind, and command over his feelings.

"Ah, my dear friend," cried the Count in reply to him, "I would give half of what I am master of, to merit the flattering opinion you have conceived of me, so essential to happiness is, I am convinced, the ascendancy you allude to over one's self; but the truth is, instead of being exactly what you suppose, I am rather too much governed by circumstances; but

whether owing to my being generally unprepared for those that occur, or to more than usual delicacy of nerves, or susceptibility of disposition, I cannot positively determine; I, however, rather think to the former; and this inclines me to believe, for I have deeply considered the subject, that we should be not only happier, but, in general, more rational than we are, was our knowledge of events not limited to the present moment; by foresight, by being permitted to see the course that destiny will take, we should be prepared for the various vicissitudes of this life, and of course enabled to support them with propriety: for the light that comes upon us by degrees does not dazzle, neither does the storm that gives intimation of its approach appal us, like that which bursts with sudden fury o'er us. With what moderation would he enjoy his prosperity, who beheld a dismal reverse approaching; with what diligence be prompted to improve the flying hours, by seeing the inevitable  
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term drawing near which was to finish his career?"

"Pardon me, my Lord," said Osmond, "for acknowledging a difference of opinion in the present instance. Was this (by many coveted) fore-knowledge granted, it is my firm opinion, that it would prove the most fatal gift the Almighty could bestow upon us. If the successive scenes of distress which we are all more or less destined to go through were laid before us in one view, perpetual sadness would overcast our lives; hardly would any transient gleams of interposing joy be able to force their way through the dark and portentous cloud; faint would be the relish of pleasures of which we foresaw the close. Ask your own heart, my Lord, did you ever thoroughly relish a happiness, the termination of which you foresaw?—Insupportable would be the burthen of affliction, with which we should find ourselves oppressed by the union of present

with anticipated sorrow. Friends would commence their intimacies with lamenting the hour that was to dissolve them, and, with weeping eye, the parent would every moment survey the child whom he knew he was destined to lose. In short, was that mysterious veil that now covers futurity lifted up, all the gaiety of life would instantly, I am confident, vanish—its flattering hopes, its pleasing illusions, and nothing but its vanity and sadness remain.”

“By Heaven!” exclaimed the Count, rapturously, and after listening with the most profound attention to him, “you have thrown a new light on the subject. Ah! I now see—yes, I am thoroughly convinced; my ideas on it were erroneous; and were it possible to wish for your society more than I previously did, I should now do so, from the arguments you have just advanced; for, be I what I may, I have still ever delighted in the converse of the wise and virtuous.”

Osmond

Osmond bowed and smiled. "To some speeches, my Lord," said he, "there is no making a reply."

Soon after the arrival of the carriage the Count had sent for to Santillana, he and Osmond took leave of the good fisherman and his wife. At the moment of parting, the latter slipped five guineas into the hand of their grandson, aware that to have offered it to them would have been useless.

During the short ride to Santillana, the Count, notwithstanding the languor his recent accident occasioned, continued to converse with the same vivacity he had displayed in the cottage of the fisherman. He was so exhausted, however, by the exertions he made to do this, that on reaching the inn at Santillana, where he lodged, he was compelled to lie down.

The evening not being far advanced, and the next morning fixed for their departure, Osmond availed himself of the opportunity this circumstance afforded him to view the town, accompanied by Antonio, his Lord-



ship's valet, in the capacity of guide, and whom, as the Count had predicted, the reappearance of his master had rescued from absolute despair.

On returning from his ramble, which afforded him much amusement, Osmond found the Count up, and awaiting him to an elegant supper. That it was complaisance alone, however, which had induced him to rise, was so evident to Osmond, that he did not suffer him to continue long at table.

The next morning, after an early breakfast, they embarked for the Castle of Acerenza. The Count had engaged a vessel to himself, and nothing was omitted that could render the voyage pleasant.

Both his companion and every thing on board ship must, however, have been the exact reverse of agreeable, to have prevented Osmond from enjoying a voyage that afforded him an opportunity of viewing the varying and enchanting shores of the Mediterranean.

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From objects without, his attention, however, was soon, in a great measure, diverted by that which the conduct of the Count excited. He had not been many days on board ere he began to evince a variableness and inconsistency in his manner and actions, which greatly surprised Osmond.

From being all life and spirits, he would suddenly fall into fits of deep musing, assume by degrees a vacant air, and prove that he was indeed abstracted from all surrounding objects, by the wild emotion he betrayed if suddenly addressed. At first Osmond imputed this changeableness to caprice, but minute observation shortly convinced him that he was wrong in having done so, that to some secret sorrow it was alone owing; but what the origin of this sorrow could possibly be, he was at a loss to conjecture, since from appearances, as well as the Count's own assertions, he was led to imagine him in possession of all that is generally reckoned essential to felicity.

“But so it is,” said Osmond to himself, as he mused upon the subject, “by one means or other we are all brought to a pretty equal level with regard to happiness; the poor have their comforts, the rich their cares; and much seldomer than it is, would envy be excited, did we more narrowly examine into the condition of one another.”

With respect to himself, the Count's behaviour knew no variation; for an instant he never relaxed in his attentions to him, nor ceased repeating that, for a long, long period before, he had not been so happy as since he had had him for a companion. “But in this, as in every other instance,” said the Count, following up this assertion, “one day, I make no doubt I shall find my happiness as fugitive as it has hitherto been. Ah! my dear friend, how dreadful is the destiny of some men! how dreadful the reflection, that when once planned, it becomes immutable!”

“I hope

"I hope you are not a predestinarian, Count," cried Osmond; "since from the wretchedness I am persuaded he must feel who is, the erroneous ideas he must harbour of the goodness and justice of Providence, I should regret to think you were. We are led to believe we must hereafter answer for our actions, but how could we bring ourselves to think our doing so just or reasonable, if, in our journey through life, guided by fate, not inclination?"

"Assuredly, assuredly," exclaimed the Count, with quickness, and starting from a thoughtful attitude, "my dear friend," grasping the arm of Osmond; "how just are your sentiments on every subject! Uncommon pains must certainly have been taken with you. I have received a good education myself—indeed, the first Italy afforded—but still, compared with you, find myself extremely deficient."

But only owing, Osmond was convinced, to there having been no certain rules laid down

down for his guidance. To the want of these he imputed the fluctuating state of his opinions, manifested by his ready acquiescence to those of others, the sudden changes in his temper and transitions in his humour—like a ship which, when turned adrift, rides at the mercy of the wind and tide, he saw him, in consequence of being untaught to govern himself, the alternate sport of fancy and passion, now magnifying a mole-hill into a mountain, now sinking a mountain into a mole-hill.

More than once Osmond thought he seemed inclined to repose unlimited confidence in him; but though, as may naturally be supposed, not without curiosity to know the cause of his uneasiness, he made no effort to encourage him to do so, conceiving their intimacy not sufficiently long to warrant his making an attempt to pry into his secrets; and besides that, nothing could justify a man's seeking to discover the concealed sorrows of another, but a thorough conviction, on his part, of hav-

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ing the power of administering consolation to them.

They were seated, one evening, in the cabin, at an open window, which afforded them an opportunity of seeing the "Queen of the silver bow" rising high in the heavens, and silvering with her bright beams the swelling waves, when the Count, after a thoughtful pause of some minutes, suddenly exclaimed—

"How delightful is this scene!—and hark, the mariners begin their evening hymn to the Virgin, as if, Chevalier, like your poet, Shakespeare, they thought "silence and night become the touches of sweet harmony." I forget whether I have or not already told you that in your language I have made some proficiency."

Osmond, by a bow, signified he had, and the Count proceeded to descant upon the tranquillising effect which a scene such as they were then viewing was calculated to have upon the mind, "an effect which convinces me," he added, "that for a  
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wounded mind there is nothing like the quietness of solitude."

"Excuse me, my dear Count," said Osmond, unwilling to miss any opportunity that occurred for endeavouring to correct his new friend's erroneous way of thinking, "for confessing I do not agree with you in thinking so. The situation that permits our fulfilling the incumbent duties of life with propriety, is one that is infinitely better adapted to heal and renovate the wounded mind; since, in the first place, it imperceptibly abstracts it from the contemplation of its sorrows, and, in the next, affords it opportunities of obtaining its own plaudits, than which surely nothing can be more sweet, more cheering, or more consolatory. But were it even otherwise, still a man could not be excused for withdrawing from society, while conscious that his continuance in it could be beneficial to any individual, which he who possesses health, strength, understanding, and fortune, assuredly must be. Permit me to  
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give you the sentiments of that elegant writer, Doctor Zimmerman, on the subject.

“Those who have passed their lives in the domestic privacies of retirement, who have been accustomed but to friendship and love, who have formed their notion of virtue from those bright images which the purity of religion, the perfection of moral sentiments, and the feelings of an affectionate heart, have planted in their minds, are too apt to yield to the abhorrence and disgust they must unavoidably feel on a first view of the artificial manners and unblushing vices of the world. Issuing from the calm retreats of innocence and simplicity, and fondly hoping to meet with more enlarged perfection in the world, their amiable, just, and benevolent dispositions are shocked at the sour severities, the sordid selfishness, the gross injustice, the base artifices, and the inhuman cruelties, which deform the fairest features of social life, and disgrace the best-formed fabric of human happiness. Revolting, however, as this

this disappointment must certainly be, and grievously as such characters must be wounded on entering the world, it is a cowardly desertion of their duty to shrink from the task, and withdraw their services from their fellow-creatures."—Besides, I am thoroughly convinced," continued Osmond, "that he who should, in the morning of life, retire into solitude, would soon become the victim of regret and repentance, since the buoyant heart of youth can never long be the seat of *ennui* or disgust, can seldom long feel satisfied without moving in an active sphere; it is only in the declining period of life, when those who cheered, assisted, and supported us in our progress through it, have one by one disappeared from its busy scenes, or disappointed the confidence we fondly reposed in their affections, that we can, if ever, feel a permanent wish for entire seclusion."

"My dear friend," cried the Count, with the animation with which he was wont to speak whenever he was pleased, "in how different

different a light do you make me view things to what I did before ! I candidly confess, for some time past, I have been thinking of quitting the world, and deliberating whether to throw myself into the monastery of La Trappe, a hermitage on the Apennines, or one on Montserrat ; but now, in consequence of your arguments, I entirely abandon the idea, and decide upon maintaining my post in the busy world. Yet, my dear friend, I believe you would scarcely wonder at my having almost resolved to quit it, did you know all I have gone through. If you have no objection, I will give you a sketch of my story ; indeed, I am anxious to do so, in order, by accounting for the reveries into which I so frequently fall, to obtain your forgiveness for them."

Osmond bowed, and said he should conceive himself honoured by his Lordship's confidence.

Accordingly the Count began as follows.

CHAP.

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## CHAP. VI.

“ The Gods are just.—

But how can finite measure infinite ?

Reason, alas ! it does not know itself :

But man, vain man, would, with this short-lin'd plummet,

Fathom the vast abyss of heav'nly justice.

Whatever is, is in it causes just :

But purblind man

Sees but a part o' th' chain, the nearest link ;

His eyes not carrying to that equal beam

That poises all above.”

DRYDEN OEDIP.

“ I HAVE already told you that I am the heir of the Placentia family : at a very early period I succeeded to my paternal titles and estates ; my mother dying in giving me birth, and my father soon after falling in the field of battle. By his will, I was placed under the guardianship of my maternal uncle, the Marchese Morati, who, having

having no children of his own, adopted me as his son, and treated me in every instance, as did also his amiable lady, as if I had been so in reality.

“ My education was suitable to my rank, and happily did my days glide on, until I completed my nineteenth year; from which period (continued the Count, casting his eyes towards heaven, and heaving a deep sigh) I may date the commencement of all my sorrows. Gracious God! had it been thy will to have snatched me hence at that time, what misery should I have been spared! But to proceed.—Among the many young men I became acquainted with, on repairing from the Castle of Acerenza, the residence of my uncle, to Naples, for the completion of my education, there was none I so much admired, or became so strongly attached to, as the Count de Molina, only son of the Duke of that name, a nobleman then high in the confidence of his Sovereign, and filling the  
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the principal employments in the state, but whose hereditary fortune, through various causes, was much impaired.

“De Molina returned my regard, and shortly becoming almost inseparable, I was introduced to his family, and thus obtained an opportunity of beholding his sister, the heavenly Elizara, about thirteen, when first she met my ardent gaze. To see, and not to love her, was impossible; and ere I was well sensible of being her slave, I found, on being united to her depended my future happiness; but that I should find no difficulty in accomplishing my wishes relative to her, I confidently assured myself, my rank and fortune entitling me to an alliance with the most illustrious.

“Conceiving that my uncle, as my guardian, was the properest person to disclose those wishes, I hastened to Acerenza, and flinging myself at the feet of the good man, implored him to repair without delay to Naples, and be at once the revealer and advocate of my passion for the beautiful

tiful Elizara. He heard the acknowledgment of it with satisfaction, her connections being such as to render an alliance with her truly desirable. Accordingly, he had no hesitation in complying with my request. In full assurance of succeeding in his embassy, he set out for Naples, leaving me behind him, for the purpose of accompanying my aunt thither, as soon as we received a summons from him to follow.

“ I will not dwell on the delightful reveries in which I indulged after his departure, since, alas! they were full of anticipations of happiness I was destined never to experience; suffice it to say, that never was a wretch fated to disappointment, less prepared for it than I was; for oh! my friend, I was doomed to experience the most severe, the most excruciating one, doomed to hear that Elizara was engaged—engaged too, as if to aggravate the anguish imparted by the circumstance, to an enemy of my house, the Marchese Salvilina—more, that she loved him, that she had given him  
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possession of that virgin heart for which I sighed! Gracious Heaven, what were my feelings on being informed of this by my uncle! I raved—I wept—I abandoned myself to despair, and during its first paroxysms, might have been tempted to have raised my hand against my life, but for the vigilance of those by whom I was surrounded; and if I had, seeing I was utterly lost to hope, should I have been much to blame, my dear friend?” addressing Osmond with peculiar earnestness.

“My dear Count,” returned Osmond, “your putting such a question to me, convinces me you never consulted your reason on the subject, since, had you done so, it must have convinced you that the Divine Being, who sent us into this world, only has a right to recal us from it; that trials are incidental to this life; that to shrink from those we meet with, is to betray a want of due confidence in the goodness of the Almighty, which merits not his forgiveness, and fastens a stigma on our characters  
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nothing can remove, such as the soldier would incur, who, finding himself on a post of danger, meanly deserted it. ‘By suffering well,’ says the poet, ‘our fortune we subdue.’ But even, allowing we should not all be happy enough to experience some lucky revolution in our fate, surely we should derive consolation and firmness of mind from the conviction, that in proportion to our sufferings here will be our felicity hereafter, provided those sufferings be borne with patience and fortitude.”

“ Always right, always right,” exclaimed the Count, with his usual versatility, immediately giving into the opinion of Osmond. “ My dear friend, if long blessed with your society, I clearly perceive I shall become quite an altered man: already, through your arguments, and the example of moderation and calmness you set me, I find myself acquiring a greater command over my feelings than I ever before possessed; once able to subjugate them completely, and from the state of calmness I should of consequence

quence find my mind in, I should be able to reason and reflect as you have done, and, of course, see all in a right light."

"If we early attempt the conquest of ourselves, we may rest assured we shall find the attempt neither a very painful, nor yet an unavailing one," returned Osmond. "Man against his fellow man may put forth all his strength in vain; but never shall he do so in a combat with his own passions, provided he delays not too long taking the field against them. But come, my dear Count, the beauty and serenity of the evening invite us to take a promenade on deck; when we return hither, we will, if you please, resume the game of chess we commencèd this morning, for I perceive you are agitated, and cannot therefore think of allowing you to pursue your narrative this evening."

"You are all kind consideration, my friend," said the Count, as he followed him up the cabin stairs.

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The next morning, as soon as breakfast was over, he thus continued his story:—

“ My uncle took me to different parts of Italy, trusting change of scene would divert and finally expel the corroding grief that had taken possession of my heart, and which, with deep regret, he perceived materially affecting my health; he, besides, incessantly represented to me the derogatory light in which I should make myself appear, by continuing to pine for an object I could not possess, and who had never entertained a tender sentiment for me; the foolish, the ridiculous part I acted, in wasting my days in vain regrets for such a being, while so many fully equal, if not superior to her, would be delighted to receive my addresses: in short, nothing that tenderness and wisdom could suggest, as likely to cure me of my unhappy passion, was omitted by him; but to no purpose did he exert himself to eradicate it—which perceiving, and that I grew rather worse than better for being hurried about, he at length hearkened to my ar-



dent solicitations to return to Acerenza, for the delightful solitudes of which, than which nothing perhaps can be conceived more enchanting, I absolutely longed.

“ Their tranquillity had soon a salutary effect upon me; by degrees the agitation of my spirits subsided. The anguish of my mind abated sufficiently to permit the renewal of my former studies, that in particular of the English language. In the poetry of your country I frequently found a softness, a tenderness, not rivaling, 'tis true, but certainly, in some instances, not inferior to that for which the Italian poetry is famed. The dramatic writers, in particular, I found to excel in both; hence they became my favourite authors, insomuch that I was seldom without the works of one or other of them about me, especially when I quitted the Castle, for the purpose of wandering amongst the awful shades embowering it, and which at this period I much delighted in.

“ After

“After a long and solitary ramble one evening, feeling myself somewhat fatigued, I seated myself upon a verdant bank, within the shelter of a richly variegated and extensive wood, then glowing with the refulgence of the setting sun. Charmed with the awful tranquillity of the scene, so soothing and so well according with the feelings then prevailing in my mind, I could not forbear, in the enthusiasm it excited, repeating aloud, from a volume of your poet Shakespeare, which I had just drawn from my pocket—

“This shadowing desert, unfrequented woods,  
I better brook than flourishing peopl'd towns.  
Here I can sit alone, unseen of any,  
And to the nightingale's complaining notes  
Tune my distresses, and record my woes.”

Scarcely had the sound of my own voice ceased to vibrate on my ear, ere another, softer and more sweet than any I had ever before heard, saluted it, chaunting a simple melody. It seemed to be near; but in

vain did my eyes wander around, in eager quest of the object from whom it came: at length, on its ceasing, I arose, and cautiously advancing towards the spot whence I fancied it had proceeded, espied, through the trees, a young lad, sitting on a mossy bank, clad in a shepherd's habit, his face entirely concealed from view by a large hat.

“ On my approach, as if alarmed by the rustling noise occasioned by my making my way through the thickets that interposed between him and me, he started up, and fled with precipitation. The elegance of his figure, which his flight displayed to the greatest advantage, struck me with admiration; and I continued gazing after him till he was completely lost to my view in an immensity of shade. He did not, however, as quickly vanish from my mind as he had done from my sight. Never had I seen any thing equal to the grace and symmetry of his form; and but perhaps owing to my imagination being a little heated  
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at the moment by the studies I had for some time been pursuing, I could not divest myself of the idea of his present dress and occupation being such as he was not accustomed to; in short, that misfortunes had compelled him to conceal beneath the humble garb of a shepherd, one who had, as the divine Poet, from which I have just quoted, says—

“ Seen better days,  
And had with holy bell been knoll'd to church;  
And sat at good mens feasts, and wip'd his eyes  
Of drops that sacred pity had engender'd.”

This idea induced me to form the resolution of seeking him out, that if my conjecture was right, I might have the happiness of serving him. The following day I repaired to the wood, but in vain did I explore its beaten tracks. No shepherd was to be seen. I passed the ensuing one in the same manner, and to as little purpose. Neither were the enquiries I caused to be made after him throughout the neigh-

bourhood more successful than my own researches, and at last I began to despair of ever beholding him again, or obtaining an opportunity of carrying into effect the many projects I had formed for his advantage. The relinquishment of these cost me no small pain, so thoroughly had I prepossessed myself with the idea of his being a person in misfortune, needing the services of a powerful friend; had I been inclined to superstition, I should probably, from the suddenness of his disappearance, and the ill success of my enquiries after him, have been tempted to have taken him for a creature of the other world, dispatched to this on some gracious errand: as it was, I confess I gave way at times to very fanciful ideas respecting him.

“ One morning, about a fortnight after I had seen him, as I was reading in my study, a servant entered it, almost breathless, to inform me he had just seen the young shepherd in an adjacent wood. I directly hastened thither, and on reaching the

the spot where I was told he had been seen, had the satisfaction of finding him there. On first catching a glimpse of him, his face, as in the first instance, was concealed from me, but as I drew near, he raised it, and discovered to my view—think, my dear friend, what my feelings must have been at the moment—the features, the heavenly features of Elizara de Molina!—Bolts and bars could scarcely have impeded my progress at the moment—in an instant I had her clasped to the heart which had been so long tortured with despair on her account. Oh, my dear friend, imagine——

“But have you ever been in love,” cried the Count, with a sudden change in his voice, and giving Osmond an anxiously enquiring look, “for if you have, you can of course so well picture them to yourself, that it will be quite unnecessary for me to attempt describing the raptures I experienced, at finding that had the divine maid been at liberty to obey the dictates of inclination,

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clination, I never should have felt a pang on her account."

Osmond laughed.—"As yet, I confess," said he, "I am a stranger to those agonies the poet styles charming."

"Well, well, your time is yet to come," cried the Count.—"But to proceed—My joy at discovering I was beloved by my Elizara was as extravagant as my grief had been when I imagined the reverse: scarcely could I credit the evidence of my senses, scarcely think myself awake, when I heard her melodious voice murmuring in my ear the acknowledgment of a reciprocal passion. The purport of her story to me was as follows:—

"The Duke, her father, who had for a long time been a widower, became enamoured, about the period I first saw her, of a blooming girl, under the guardianship of the Marchese Salvilina, but who refused him her hand, except, in return, he bestowed upon him that of his daughter. The Duke, whose principal study had ever been

been his own gratification, was not so regardless of it now as not readily to promise this, a promise which not all the solicitations of his daughter could induce him to retract, though she repeatedly assured him death would be preferable to an union with Salvilina, even though her heart had not been engaged to another, his age, appearance, and character being all against him. He knew his own wishes could not be accomplished except the Marchese's were, and this consideration effectually hardened his heart against her. Convinced, at length, that he was completely deaf to the voice of nature, Elizara conceived herself fully justified in flying from his tyranny, and endeavouring to ensure her own happiness, by undeceiving me with regard to her sentiments.

“ Accordingly, a few days prior to the one fixed on for her nuptials with Salvilina, she unbosomed herself to her woman, who, fortunately for her, had been the favourite attendant of her deceased mother, and was

by her not only provided with a disguise, that enabled her to escape unmolested from the Palace of Molina, but accompanied from it.

“ Previous to her elopement, she heard of my being at Acerenza, and thither therefore decided on immediately bending her steps, to which her faithful companion being related to a person in the neighbourhood, was an additional inducement. On her arriving, however, in it, a thousand fears, the offspring of delicacy, started in her mind, and finally determined her on leaving it to chance to acquaint me with our vicinity to each other. In the meanwhile, in order to be enabled with still greater security to resort to the solitudes, she understood, I frequented, she laid aside the disguise in which she had escaped from the palace of her father, and assumed that of a shepherd’s boy.

“ Two tedious weeks passed away without her seeing me: at length she beheld me, but her joy at the moment was damped by

by hearing me speak, as from that circumstance she concluded I could not be alone, without being assured of which, both modesty and apprehension forbade her letting me see her. The day ensuing the one she saw me, several suspicious looking men were discovered lurking in the neighbourhood, whom, not doubting to be emissaries of her father's, or disappointed lover, she resolved, till informed of their departure from it, not to venture out again: hence, to this resolution was owing the fruitlessness of my search after her.

“ When the transports excited by this meeting and *eclaircissement* had sufficiently subsided to permit us to think and speak in a rational manner, my lovely mistress consented to take up her residence at the Castle of Acerenza, and render me the happiest of men, provided my uncle and aunt invited her to it, and still sanctioned my addresses to her.

“ Impatient to see her beneath their  
5 roof,

roof, and have her receive from them the assurance so essential to my felicity, I was parting from her sooner than I could otherwise have brought myself to do, when, pity me, my friend—pity a man who on the very brink of happiness—happiness which he had been long languishing for, saw himself suddenly precipitated into misery. Savilina, with several ruffians, stood before us. I was unarmed; the efforts, therefore, which I made to prevent my Elizara from being torn from me were ineffectual: she was forced from my arms, and at the same moment the cowardly and detestable Salvilina, enraged by the open avowal of her passion for me, and dreading the fury of my resentment, stabbed me twice in the side, and left me to all appearance dead. My non-appearance in the banquetting-room at the usual hour occasioned a search for me: for many hours after I was brought home, I remained senseless, so completely was I exhausted by loss  
of

of blood, and the dreadful agitation I had undergone.

“ As soon as I regained the faculty of speech, I accounted to my nearly distracted relatives for the situation in which they found me, but not so much for the purpose of awakening their resentment against the perfidious Salvilina, as for that of stimulating them to make immediate exertions for the recovery of Elizara: so thoroughly persuaded, however, were they, that the moment he had got her into his power, he had forced her to become his, that they made not an effort for the purpose; which at length discovering, through means of my valet Antonio, I resolved, though still extremely weak and ill, on immediately quitting the castle, in order to attempt her rescue myself; or, if too late to prevent her becoming the wife of my foe, to take signal vengeance on him for having robbed me of her, and thus blasted the felicity of both our lives.

“ Aware that to have mentioned this resolution



solution would have been to cause its frustration, I merely confided it to Antonio, whose assistance was requisite to enable me to carry it into effect. At the midnight hour I stole from the castle, attended by him; nor until the halting of the carriage the next morning, which he had procured to take me from it, once thought of the consternation and agony into which my flight from it at such a juncture would throw my affectionate relatives; no sooner, however, had the reflection occurred, than I sat down to implore their forgiveness for the step I had taken, and assure them that I should not be unmindful of the life on which I knew they set so high a value. I dispatched my letter by a special messenger, and then with all possible expedition pursued my journey to Naples.

“ On my arrival, I hastened to the Palace of Molina, and was at once surprised and agonized by hearing of the sudden death of the Duke, and that a rumour prevailed

vailed throughout the palace of my Elizara being privately married to the Marchese Salvilina; but where they were, or her brother, the young Duke, the porter either could not or would not inform me. I will not fatigue you by detailing the various methods I had recourse to for endeavouring to discover the retreat of my abhorred rival, and whether indeed he had deprived me of all hope of possessing my Elizara. All proved unsuccessful, and at last I began to think my wisest way would be to try and throw him off his guard, by ceasing for a time all public enquiries, at least, and assuming an appearance of gaiety; this I accordingly did, and for the better supporting the deception, began to frequent the different public places, though, Heaven knows, with a heart little disposed for amusement.

“ I repaired one evening to a gambling-house, with a party of young noblemen, with whom I had dined. My joy was unspeakable, when on entering a billiard-room,

room, the first object I beheld was the brother of my Elizara. It was a short-lived joy, however, for, on flying to him, and attempting to take his hand, he drew back, with a cold and repelling air; and after surveying me for an instant, with a haughty and indignant look, turned away in contemptuous silence. Astonishment at this conduct rivetted me for a few seconds to the floor; to let it pass, however, without enquiring into the cause of it, was not to be thought of; as soon, therefore, as I recollected myself, I again approached him, and having obtained his notice by gently pressing his arm, for he kept his looks studiously averted from mine, I begged, in a low tone, to know to what I was to attribute the extraordinary reception I had met with from him? At this question he turned upon me a look full of fierceness, and bade me ask my own heart.

‘It cannot enlighten me on the subject,’ I replied, ‘since it has ever been faithful to the friendship it vowed to you.’

‘’Tis

‘ ’Tis false,’ he exclaimed with encreasing fury; ‘ had it been so, the honour of my house would never have been injured, by the seduction of my sister from her family.’

“ I started ; in this accusation I clearly recognised the infernal machinations of Salvilina.

‘ By Heaven,’ I passionately returned, ‘ I have been unjustly accused: but this is no place for an explanation; let us retire, and I trust I shall soon be able to convince you that I have been so.’

‘ Take this,’ he cried, in a voice of thunder, ‘ for so impudently avowing to me your belief of being able to impose upon me;’ and as he spoke, he struck me across the face with the back of his hand.

“ When I tell you that at this very moment my blood boils with indignation at the recollection of this injurious treatment, you may easily picture to yourself, my dear friend, my feelings at the instant of receiving it. I directly drew. I no longer  
thought

thought of his being the brother of Elizara—I thought only of revenge. But even though my feelings had been less outraged than they were, still I could not have acted otherwise than I did, without having had my name branded with eternal infamy, seeing we were surrounded by a crowd of the most distinguished men in Naples.

“The Duke followed my example; a kind of desperate fury nerved my arm, and at the first pass he fell lifeless at my feet. With his last sigh vanished my last lingering hope of happiness; for that Elizara, be her situation what it might, would ever consent to a union with the destroyer of her brother, I could not flatter myself. Horrible reflections overwhelmed me, and rendered me unable to think of, much less make, an effort for my safety.

“The friends, however, who had accompanied me to the billiard-room, were not uninterested about it; they hurried me away, and caused Antonio to set out with me directly for Rodez, in France, where I  
had

had some relatives residing. After being there a few days, I awoke, as from a lethargy, and recollecting, the very morning of the day on which the fatal rencontre took place, my having heard that Salvilina had been recently seen at Ovideo, in Spain, I determined on proceeding thither immediately, for the purpose of endeavouring to ascertain the fate of Elizara; but no longer from any selfish motive, being thoroughly convinced, as I have already said, that nothing could induce her to become the wife of him, by whose hand her brother fell, even though she might be inclined to allow the provocation he had received sufficient to excuse the conduct it led to.

“Distracted as my mind was, however, I did not entirely forget the dear friends at Acerenza. Prior to my setting out for Spain, I dispatched a long explanatory letter to them.

“I commenced my journey over the Pyrennees with no other attendant than Antonio, conceiving my having more might  
pre-



prevent my travelling with the expedition I wished. We reached the borders of Spain in safety, and night approaching, were pushing forward with all our might for a hamlet, where we purposed sleeping, when we were suddenly attacked by a small party of brigands. We were both armed, and fired. The mule on which I rode, terrified by the report of the fire-arms, broke from the ruffian who had seized her bridle, and set off with a speed that was truly alarming, considering the dangers of the road. From being dashed to pieces, I was in all probability only saved by the intervention of some soldiers advancing in the direction my unruly beast had taken. They soon succeeded in securing her, and being briefly informed of what had happened, accompanied me to the spot where I had left my poor Antonio, whom the banditti having first rifled, had left for dead upon the ground. - My horror, while I imagined him so, was inexpressible, as, exclusive of the regard I felt for him on  
account

account of his long and faithful services, I considered myself the cause of his death, by having had the temerity to undertake so dangerous a journey, without the usual attendants. Thank Heaven I was rescued from the pangs which the idea of being so would have entailed upon me.

“ The soldiers conveyed him to the nearest village, where, owing to the prompt and skilful assistance he received, he speedily recovered.

“ As soon as he was again able to bear the fatigue of travelling, I recommenced my journey; but vain were all the enquiries I set afloat after Elizara and Salvilina on reaching Oviedo; I could learn no tidings of either; trusting, however, that by continuing some time in it, I might, at length, be fortunate enough to do so, I resolved on a longer stay there than I at first intended, a resolution which a letter from my aunt, the Marchesa Morati, acquainting me with the death of my uncle, and entreating me to return immediately to Acerenza,

Acerenza, as from my presence she could only derive consolation for his loss, induced me to give up. Accordingly I hastened from Oviedo to Santillana, where I was informed I should be more likely, than in any other place on the coast, to procure a speedy passage for Italy; this, however, on arriving there, I found I could not do for a few days. I tried to while away the interval, and beguile my mind of the melancholy reflections that oppressed it, by rambling about the country.

“ The result of these rambles you are acquainted with; permit me, however, to observe, that had the accident they occasioned me to meet with been attended with infinitely more serious consequences than it was, I should nevertheless have rejoiced at it, since the means of introducing me to your acquaintance—to you, to whose arguments I shall ever consider myself indebted, for not having acted in a manner derogatory to my character, as, but for you, I should assuredly, after passing  
sing

sing a little time with my aunt, have thrown myself into a religious solitude, owing to my despair about Elizara, a measure, I now clearly perceive, that could not have failed of drawing upon me the imputation of weakness. Yet, oh my dear friend, can you wonder that I should be sick of life? robbed as I have been of all that gave it value in my eyes, surely no one can deny that I am the most unfortunate of men? Yes, as one of your elegant poets says—

“ Time gives increase to my afflictions:  
The circling hours, that gather all the woes,  
Which are diffus’d thro’ the revolving year,  
Come heavy laden with the oppressing weight  
To me.—With me successively they leave  
The sighs, the tears, the groans, and restless cares,  
And all the damps of grief that did retard their flight;  
They shake their downy wings, and scatter all  
Their dire collected dews on my poor head,  
Then fly with joy and swiftness from me.”

“ Tell me, my dear friend,” he continued, looking anxiously at Osmond, “ do  
VOL. II. P you

you not think I have a right to exclaim against fortune? Do you not think I have met with more than common calamities, that I am one of the most singularly unfortunate of my species?"

"Since you press for my opinion, I trust, my dear Count," replied Osmond, "you will excuse me for saying that I see nothing in what you have met with, that differs from the ordinary lot of man, since we are all liable to trials, to misfortunes of various kinds—all doomed, at some period or other, in a greater or less degree, to experience the uncertainty of worldly pursuits, doubtless to prevent our attachment to this transitory state being too great. Complaints may aggravate, but most certainly can never alleviate our afflictions—afflictions which are as often, if not oftener, brought on by our own misconduct than by circumstances we could prevent: in either case, however, they should be borne with patience, from the conviction that they could not have befallen us without

the permission of the Most High, and the consideration that the attainment of our wishes might not by any means have been instrumental to the furtherance of our happiness. Yet think not, my dear Count, from what I have said, that I do not sincerely feel for your sufferings. They have been great, though not singular—such as entitle you to, and must ensure to you, the sympathy of every feeling heart: in time, I trust the painful impression they have made upon your mind, will lessen sufficiently to allow of your enjoying the happiness still within your reach. Your own exertions will do much towards overcoming it: and to these I think you must feel yourself stimulated, by the expectations you must be conscious your friends have formed with respect to you, from the understanding you possess, and the regard you have ever professed for them. Perseverance in a hopeless passion nothing can excuse.”



“Except,” eagerly interposed the Count,  
 “the impossibility of conquering it.”

“Pardon me,” rejoined Osmond, “I can admit of no such impossibility. You are fond of quotations from the English poets; hear what one of them says on the subject:

“Rouse to the combat,  
 And thou art sure to conquer; wars shall restore thee—  
 The sound of arms shall wake thy martial ardour,  
 And cure this am’rous sickness of thy soul,  
 Begun by sloth, and nurs’d by too much ease.  
 The idle God of Love supinely dreams  
 Amidst inglorious shades of purling streams,  
 In rosy fetters and fantastic chains  
 He binds deluded maids and simple swains;  
 With soft enjoyments woos them to forget  
 The hardy toils and labours of the great:  
 But if the warlike trumpet’s loud alarms  
 To virtuous acts excite, and manly arms,  
 The coward boy avows his abject fear,  
 On silken wings sublime he cuts the air,  
 Scar’d at the noble noise, and thunder of the war.”

“By Heaven,” exclaimed the Count, starting from his chair with wildness in his eyes,  
 “I would

“I would not if I could be cured of mine ;  
and well it is for me that I do not wish to  
be so, since I know it to be perfectly im-  
possible that I should ever conquer a pas-  
sion such as mine !

“ I have no reason left that can assist me ;  
And none would have. My love's a noble madness,  
Which shews the cause deserves it. Moderate sorrow  
Fits vulgar love, and suits a vulgar man :  
But I have lov'd with such transcendant passion,  
I soar'd at first quite out of Reason's view,  
And now am lost above it.”

Osmond could not forbear smiling both externally and internally at this rant: his smile, however, was quickly succeeded by regret, for the unsettled, and of consequence unhappy state of the Count's mind, but notwithstanding his little hastinesses and foibles, he could not avoid admiring, as well as loving him, so amiable were his manners, so liberal his sentiments, so benevolent his heart.

END OF VOL. II.



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